

**SERMON FOR THE WEDDING BLESSING OF RAJ AND RAE KHIMJI |  
16. 09.2022 “Never safer when I am in your hands”**

**Don't get me wrong: I love my job. But I do sometimes have to do a double-take when people offer me poetry for weddings and funerals! So often badly crafted, ersatz smoltch oozes all over the page and still I am obliged to say how perfect the poem is - and to smile!**

**But I had no such qualms about reading something Rae had offered me. Ever since she made her first enquiry about today's blessing I knew that with Raj, we had two thoughtful people who wanted to share something of real worth. Even then I was really taken with this piece by Clementine von Radics which forms part of today's service. Still only 30, she isn't afraid to put real emotions into words. In the blurb to her book of poems, *Mouthful of forever*, the editors write: *Clementine von Radics talks of love, loss, and the uncertainties and beauties of life with a ravishing poetic voice and a piercing bravura!***

**And they are right: every line is real as it talks about the pain of loss, about this relationship not having been the first, about having almost given up on finding true love. It doesn't have the full story of Raj and Rae – of having been let down, of having one's sense of self shattered while trying to put a brave face on it all, the inevitable conflicts and the guilt, the need for help but the wonderful line about scars alludes with so much sensitivity to these two intelligent people whose lives have not been entirely easy. It is a great choice.**

**And it is also a great choice because in the poem we hear the how imperfections and difficulties, trials and challenges at least partially overcome are – actually – in themselves, a form of perfection. It is the Japanese art of Kintsugi where a broken pot is mended with gold, the potter bonding the pieces together so that the new ceramic is even more beautiful than the original. It is seeing the flaws not as something to be hidden but something to be celebrated because it 'makes' the person who they are. *You are the most beautiful thing that I have ever see ... and I will love you even when you are a hurricane...***

**Raj and Rae have seen many things and done many things – and they bring with them so much thoughtfulness and experience. But they also bring into this relationship two very different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. As Rae says, she is very conscious of her Korean-American Christian background – even if that doesn't form quite so strong an element in her life as Raj's Portuguese Hindu heritage.**

**But as Raj said, the essence of life – in addition to football – is actually the use of our time and that thoughtfulness supercedes so many of the easy labels we place on ourselves so that – as we stand in a Christian Church, we are still aware that what we are doing is to draw on emotional ties and levels of commitment which are far deeper than any one culture or faith. As the reading from Ecclesiastes reminds us, two strands are always better than one and we need each other to help us to stand up again. As Clementine says, *I would need to write a dictionary to describe the way it feels to have finally found you.***

**And so, at the heart of this and every marriage, of whatever tradition, after the promises are made and received, lies the most authentic words of all: *I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage; with my body I honour you. All that I am I give to you and all that I have I share with you.***

**Not because you live up to some gooey picture of what the best partner should be like but because of who each of you are: misshapen, cracked, dented by experience maybe, but the right person for one another.**

**That is true love and we are so delighted that both of you were willing to come and share yourselves and all these insights with us at St James' today.**

**May those cords of love surround you and keep you together for the whole of your lives together. As a great Christian teacher once said about marriage: *we are never safer than when we are in the hands of the one we love.***