

I,  
you,  
we,  
them,  
me:  
those were the five titles  
of the lunchtime Lent lectures  
I gave at York Minster in 1997.  
I went on to produce  
the lectures as a book,  
You were made for me,  
drawing the title  
from that great Father of the Church  
and full-time twerp  
Freddie and the Dreamers  
and his 1960s hit.

Many people were incredulous  
that I could spin out five lectures  
let alone a book  
on a handful of monosyllabic personal pronouns.

But I proved them wrong,  
and this morning I raise the stakes  
by preaching on just one short word:  
and.

And is a word found in every language:  
we, wa, wu in Hebrew,  
καὶ in Greek,  
et or -que in Latin,  
et in French,  
und in German.

A little word,

a common word,

but a sophisticated word.

It'll be quite a while before Fergus uses it.

Mama,

Dada,

jurisprudence:

those words will be already there.

But mama

and

dada will be quite a leap in perception.

And is an important word

which makes connections

which binds things together.

Usually obvious things:

love and marriage

go together like

a horse and carriage.

But

and

can actually bind anything together,

even the most unlikely couples:

Prince Charles and turnips,

bishops and tarts,

Boris Johnson and finesse.

This morning I want to think about

Fergus and ?

with all the different partners that can be supplied.

First of all, though,

we have to go one step back

to Fergus' parents,

Jo and Julian.

Without their making a connection,

without the marriage of Jo and Julian,

celebrated in this church five years ago this month,

Fergus simply would not be.

So for the love between Jo and Julian

we thank God today.

And as we thank God for Fergus' parents,

we can thank God for all our parents.

It is always of great comfort to me

when I quake in the pulpit before stoney-faced congregations,

that 99% of the people before me

only came into being because of an act of sexual intercourse,

an act of love between one person and another.

How the other 1% came into being,

God alone knows.

But thank God for and,

the shorthand word for making a connection.

No and,

no life.

As for Fergus and,

well so many contenders for that partnership.

Fergus and his future.

All our prayers are that it will be

a bright future,

a happy future,

a successful future,

a faithful future.

So much will depend on things outside Fergus' control:

Fergus and the environment;

Fergus and the economy;

Fergus and the world;

Fergus and other people.

In many contexts Fergus will be in control,

in many contexts he will be a victim,

things will simply happen

over which he has no control.

Fergus will initiate good things,

will initiate bad things –

that's part and parcel of his humanity.

Good things will happen to him,

bad things will happen to him:

that's the way creation is.

Which brings me to why we are all here today.

Fergus and God.

That's one of those conjunctions,

if you think about it,

that really should jar.

Fergus, a mortal human being

and

God

creator of the big bang and the big crunch

and all stops in between.

It's incredible to link those two together.

Yet link them we do.

And we dare to do that

because of this day,

Whitsunday,

Pentecost,

when we celebrate the coming of God's Holy Spirit.

That spirit

is the agent which enables the impossible to be linked:

God and Fergus,

God and us.

An impossible marriage

with the spirit providing the connection,

the and

to make the impossible possible.

The Holy Spirit is a great mystery,

and it is dangerous to picture it or simplify it,

but never mind, I'm always inventing pictures.

The Holy Spirit is the God-microchip in us

which programs us to phone home –

our hearts are restless till they rest in you

sort of stuff.

But more than that,

it is the God microchip in us

which enables us to make all connections,

not just with God,

the ultimate You upper-case,

but also with the people and things around us,

all those yous lower case.

The Spirit provides the and

between us and them,

makes us notice them,

makes us alert to the wonder of them.

No Spirit no and.

No and no life.

And the ultimate picture that the Church has drawn on

for the Holy Spirit

for 2000 years

is water.

When people were baptised

they made connections,

the penny dropped about and,

God and them,

them and those around them.

Water is a marvellous symbol.

It is obviously about life,

without water we die.

But it is also the symbol of connection.

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century water

was the main means of connection

between nations and cities.

Bishopthorpe Palace by the river Ouse

is prone to terrible flooding,

but it had to be there

because the river

was the only way

the Archbishop could communicate with his Diocese and Nation.

Think about it.

No place in this Diocese is very far from a river,

the Ouse, the Derwent, the Swale, the Ure,

the Archbishop could even sail up the River Rye

with his chaplain rowing

to visit us in Helmsley.

Water is a symbol of connection,

a symbol of and.

And chemically it is fascinating,

unique.

As I've said before,

the best model I've come across  
for water  
H<sub>2</sub>O  
is this ribenna berry,  
a big purple oxygen atom  
and  
two tiny green hydrogen atoms.  
It can be both an acid,  
providing H<sup>+</sup> ions  
and an alkali,  
providing OH<sup>-</sup> ions,  
able to get on with anything really,  
dissolve anything,  
break down even the hardest rock.  
It makes connections,  
binds things together.

You get one dinner plate  
and put water on it  
and then put another dinner plate on top of it,  
they're almost impossible to pull apart.  
because of water,  
supplying the and,  
water the symbol of God's Holy Spirit,  
nothing can pull us and God apart.  
  
That Spirit enables God and Fergus  
God and each and every one of us  
to be an item.  
  
Because of today we know that God,  
the immortal, invisible, God only wise  
will be always there for Fergus,  
come what may.

And because of today we know that Fergus  
with all the promises made by mum and dad and godparents,  
we know that little Fergus will try his very best  
to be always there for God.

And?

Well, whatever.

When it is God and you,  
you can take on anything.

Those first Whitsunday disciples  
took on the world,  
took on history,  
and won it for God.