

You will not be surprised to know that Fleur specified every detail of this requiem. And equally unsurprisingly for a journalist, she chose as the Gospel 'In the beginning was the **Word**'. Fleur revelled in words, crafted words so beautifully, built – and destroyed- arguments with skilled words, wrote in poetry and prose with insight and creativity. Words mattered intimately to Fleur- and she inveighed against any lazy, inaccurate or hurtful usage of words.

And 'In the beginning was the word' but the Gospel continues- 'and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'. Words and the Word, for Fleur, and for those of us who seek to follow the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth, are like an icon, we cannot in the

end merely stay with the words, but must venture through and beyond; the words must take us into another realm, another dimension of being and commitment. The word became **flesh**. The word, and the words, must be enfleshed, made living, enacted. Fleur was never timid in this. From her experiences in brokering in secret the earliest contacts between big business and the ANC in apartheid South Africa, to berating mealy mouthed church hierarchs in Diocesan Synod; from commitment to the needs of neighbours for lifts to hospital appointments or a companionable drink, time to be spent with long term friends in loneliness or distress, or turning out to support those sleeping rough on Duke of York Square to raise funds for our local homeless charity, Glass Door. Words, and

the Word, can and must move us beyond mere spectating, into action- for the Word became flesh **and** dwelt among us.

For Fleur, as for all of us, this was not always straightforward, intuitive or easy. 'Batter my heart three person'd God' wrote John Donne, and Fleur, who chose this to be printed in the Order today, knew both the need and the cost of that battering by God- battering when pride or stubbornness, blindness or self satisfaction creep up on us. Each of us, perhaps particularly in this season of Lent, would do well to re-read that eloquent poetry daily, as Fleur did, so that we remember this Word over all, this word which seeks to speak and to be heard through us requires our opening up to God who is beyond yet present, here yet never contained,

imminent yet always transcendent. Holding together this Word which was in the beginning with obedience to that word which having become flesh must become incarnated in our every thought and word and deed amongst us, is both the mystery and the goal of the Christian life.

In such living, and dying, we are fed and nurtured by our commitment to worship, by our being thus fed being willing to act for and with God, in season and out of season. Fleur was here in Christ Church to worship, to welcome, to lead, to pray, to read, and in wider church life as well as in the organisations she was committed to, with far reach into the need for political stability in God's world, to carry responsibility and to stand in those councils for all that the Word and the words led her into-

justice, compassion, inclusion, fulness of life for all, or as Christians would say, Resurrection life.

This commitment to the Word made flesh we have all discerned in Fleur, in her we have known the Word dwelling among us, not in perfection, but in struggle and faithfulness, refracted through the particularities of her personality and experience, yet we know her also as one who weekly, in this place, prayed before receiving Christ's body and blood into her hands and soul, 'Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but speak the Word only, and I shall be healed'.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us....or as Elizabeth I wrote and Fleur lived:

*'Twas God the word that spake it, He took the bread
and brake it;*

*And what the word did make it; That I believe and
take it.'*

May that also be ours, learnt through Fleur, whose
life we celebrate and who, we pray, may now rest in
peace and rise in glory, beloved child of God.

BL

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