

Daily Reflections



Sunday 11 March 2018
(Year B)

To

Saturday 17 March 2018

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Scripture: 2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23; Psalm 136; Ephesians 2: 4-10; John 3:14-21

Jesus said, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.'

If we had to sum up Jesus' mission in one sentence this would be a very strong contender. It reminds us that God's deepest desire is for human beings to know his love for them and to be with him for eternity. The message was reiterated throughout the Hebrew Scriptures with assurances of God's saving love – a Law that gave the Jewish people clear guidance on the lifestyle that accorded with God's will for them – and interventions in human history. All this, though was filtered through people. Good people – wise people – but people bound by their time and culture. In Jesus, God sent his Son – the perfect human being to bring eternal life to God's people.

- What part of Jesus life speaks to you most strongly of God's love for humanity?
- What does it mean to you to *'believe in Jesus'*?

Spend time today pondering the depth of God's love that sent Jesus into the world – knowing that he would be misunderstood – hated – and ultimately pay the price for saving humanity in torture and death. Find a picture of Jesus that speaks to you of that love and sit with it for a while, perhaps repeating the words from our Gospel as you do until they slip into silence.

Monday 12 March 2018

Scripture: Isaiah 65: 17-21; Psalm 29; John 4: 43-54

There was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, *'Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.'* The official said to him, *'Sir, come down before my little boy dies.'* Jesus said to him, *'Go; your son will live.'*

We hear a lot about the conflicts Jesus faced with some of the royal officials – often sent to trip him up or find ways to condemn him. This royal official comes with a very different request but Jesus takes it in the same way as so many others he has faced – that this person is looking for a sign or wonder in order to believe Jesus is who he says he is. There comes a point though, when the royal official becomes a father – more concerned with the life of his little boy than with his status – and this

Saturday 17 March 2018 – St Patrick

Scripture: 1 Peter 4: 7-11; Psalm 95; Luke 5: 1-11

Jesus said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'

Although he is the patron saint of Ireland, St Patrick was not himself Irish. He was, in fact, born in Roman Britain and may have been a Roman citizen. He was kidnapped and spent several years, not as a fisherman but probably as a shepherd before escaping back to his family. He became a priest and it was at this point that the Lord called him back to Ireland. He may have made a few friends but there is no doubt that, for him, it was a call to leave the safe waters of his homeland and put out into the deeper ones of the Irish mission. And, like Peter, he agreed simply because the Lord said so.

- What do you think drew Patrick back to the place where he had lived as a slave?
- How might his willingness to take such risks have influenced the Irish tribal leaders and others and drawn them to faith in Christ?

St Patrick was faced with huge difficulties – in terms of the terrain he had to cover – some of the people and cultures he was trying to influence – and suspicion even from fellow-Christians. He is credited with a prayer that speaks of '*centring*' himself in the love of Christ. It is sometimes known as '*The Deer's Cry*'. You may like to spend a few minutes watching and praying along with one of the selection [here](#).

is opening Jesus needed to intervene and heal the child.

- What lesson did the royal official learn about his priorities in this extract?
- When have you your own priorities challenged?

Reflect today on your priorities. You might like to explore them in your journal where you can be honest about where you now feel that you have placed your focus in the wrong place – perhaps still do. Think about relationships – your life as a follower of Jesus – your work – your ambitions – and so on. Are you getting the balance right or do you need to rethink and rejig your priorities? And, if so, how might you do this.

Tuesday 13 March 2018

Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; Psalm 45; John 5:1-3,5-16

One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, '*Do you want to be made well?*' The sick man answered him, '*Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.*' Jesus said to him, '*Stand up, take your mat and walk.*' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

If we read the gospel carefully we notice that the man does not actually give a straight answer to Jesus' question. Jesus asks simply – do you want to be made well? The man does not say yes or no but comes up with very good reasons why he is still ill. It sounds partly resigned – partly as if he has given up – and partly as if he is suggesting that really it is more effort than he is able to make. Jesus cuts through what we might call '*waffle*', assumes that the man does, in fact, want to be well – and simply tells him to stop talking about – and waiting for someone to sort it out for him – and get up and walk.

- Why do you think the man was full of good reasons why he had not been made well?
- How do you think he reacted when Jesus did not just sympathise and toss a coin but told him to get to his own two feet and walk again?

Reflect today on reasons you might give for why you do not live life as fully as you might. This is not to minimise physical, mental or spiritual problems but acknowledging that sometimes they can become excuses for not being the person God actually created you to be. As you ponder, think about how Jesus might respond – kindly but possibly with a challenge to change something that will help you to grow as a person – as a daughter or son of God.

Wednesday 14 March 2018

Scripture: Isaiah 49: 8-15; Psalm 144; John 5: 17-30

Jesus said, *'I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.'*

Jesus has been laying out the closeness of his relationship with the Father – one that is more completely interdependent than anything in human experience. Very few human relationships have the openness and unity that exists between the Father and the Son. It is this that underpins everything Jesus does and says while on earth. It gives him a perspective that completely lacks self-interest. When we hear or see something and make a judgement on it, we cannot help but bring our own prejudices into them. So completely in harmony with God is Jesus, that he judges freely and justly – hearing and seeing things as they actually and not as they might seem to be.

- How does Jesus' relationship with the Father free him up to be the perfect judge?
- How might we learn from him when we come to judge situations and people that we encounter?

Reflect today on the necessary task of judging things for ourselves. We do need to weigh up what is true and life-giving – and what is likely to be harmful. Think about how you do it – and the things that might get in the way of you doing it freely. Ask the Lord for guidance about how to be a better judge of people and situations.

Thursday 15 March 2018

Scripture: Exodus 32: 7-14; Psalm 105; John 5: 31-47

Jesus said, *'How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?'*

It is great to get compliments and affirmation for the things we do but Jesus is reminding us not to see that as our priority. Of course, someone actually being in front of us and telling us how well we have done is easier to accept than the less visible or audible affirmation that comes from God. To an extent that has to be taken on trust. Sometimes, we will get a glow inside – a sense of God's pleasure in a deed – or a word – or an attitude we show to another. But quite often, we have to believe that God sees and affirms our goodness and one day will delight in showing us the glory that he wants to share with us.

- When have you had a sense of God's pleasure in something you have done or said?
- How do we stay motivated when such feelings or thoughts are not forthcoming?

In a time of quiet, humbly acknowledge some of the good things you have done – and feel again the pleasure if others have praised or thanked you for them. Then imagine yourself handing the things – and the feelings over to God to store as treasure in heaven for you.

Friday 16 March 2018

Scripture: Wisdom 2:1, 12-22 Psalm 33; John 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30

The people of Jerusalem were saying, *'We know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.'*

One of the biggest things Jesus came up against over and over again was people's expectations of the Messiah. As they say today, they do not expect to know where the Messiah will come from and yet here is someone among them who is clearly a strong candidate for the title. Jesus' other problem is where he did actually come from. He was not part of the sophisticated social life of Galilee – nor one of the citizens of the proud city of Jerusalem. He came from the north and would have spoken highly accented Aramaic – which was definitely not expected of the Messiah.

- How do you think people's own prejudices about what the Messiah would be like affected their ability to recognise Jesus for who he was?
- Do people still have similar prejudices – not so much about Jesus as about others?

Think today about Jesus' problems with other people's expectation – and then think of how you have been affected by similar problems. Also be honest and think about times when your own expectations have got in the way of seeing people for who they are – particularly if it has stopped you valuing them as much as you might have done.