Sunday 8 October –Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture: Isaiah 5: 1-7; Psalm 79; Philippians 4: 6-9; Matthew 21: 33-43

*Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures:*

*“The stone that the builders rejected*

*has become the cornerstone;*

*this was the Lord’s doing,*

*and it is amazing in our eyes”?*

Jesus is speaking to the chief priests and elders just after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His earthly ministry is drawing to a close and he will shortly be rejected utterly by many of the people – and especially the leaders. It is clear that Jesus knows his scriptures – he quotes here from psalm 118. He expects the priests and elders to be familiar with it – they will have prayed it many times but it is clear that they have not understood its meaning. It would be interesting to know whether any of them looked back on this conversation after Jesus’ rejection – death – and the rumours of his resurrection began to circulate.

* How does Jesus knowing the psalms and other scriptures make you think again about praying with the Bible yourself?
* Why do we so often not understand parts of the Bible?

Spend some time today praying with the gospel passage – or find psalm 118 in your Bible or [here](http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=370407878) and pray it slowly … simply read it line by line or verse by verse and make the words your own.

*KT*

Monday 9 October – (St Denis or St John Leonardi or Blessed John Henry Newman)

Scripture: Jonah 1: 1-2:1, 11; Psalm/ Canticle Jonah 2: 3-5, 8; Luke 10: 25-37

*Jesus said, ‘Which of these three – the priest the Levite or the Samaritan – do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’*

As so often in the gospels, we read a conversation between Jesus and someone wanting to know more and Jesus turning the tables a bit by reflecting back a question. He has told the well-known story of the Good Samaritan and knows that the answer to his question is pretty obvious but asks it anyway. He is gently pushing the questioner to think more deeply about a commandment he has known about since he was a child and probably quoted by rote – but now sees that its meaning is far deeper than he had realised until now.

* When has something you have known since you were a child taken on a deeper meaning when you became an adult?
* What difference might this encounter with Jesus have made to the man who posed the question?

Think today about the things you learned about your faith as a child or as you were preparing to become a Catholic. Ponder how differently you understand them now (hopefully!) from when you first heard them.

*KT*

Tuesday 10 October – St Paulinus of York

Scripture: Colossians 1: 24-28; Psalm 95; Matthew 28: 16-20

*Jesus said,* ‘*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.’*

Although St Paulinus is known as “of York”, much of his ministry happened elsewhere. He was part of a mission from Rome that brought Christianity back to the south-east but was asked to accompany Princess Æthelburg when she travelled north to marry King Edwin. Part of the marriage contract was that Æthelburg would be allowed to continue practising her Christian faith – Paulinus serving as her chaplain. Paulinus, though, did not see his role as simply supporting his queen and her children but tried also to bring the good news about Jesus to the people of her realm – including her husband and the child, Hilda.

* What do you think Paulinus made of the north-east having come from Rome and kingdom of Kent?
* What opportunities and difficulties do you think found here?

Try to imagine life for Paulinus – someone who was clearly used to a sophisticated life in Rome – coming up to Bamburgh, Yeavering and York. Think about what inspires someone to make such a trip. Pray for those who also go far beyond their comfort zones to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

*KT*

Wednesday 11 October – (St John XXIII)

Scripture: Jonah 4: 1-11; Psalm 85; Luke 11: 1-4

*Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’*

It is interesting that Luke tells us that Jesus was praying – he does not say that he was praying *with* his disciples. It is almost as if the disciples have been sitting watching or listening and waiting for him to finish in order to ask him to teach them to pray. They remember that prayer was one of the things John taught his disciples – though what he taught is not recorded. Clearly, the disciples see Jesus as a man of prayer and someone whose example they would like to follow.

* What do you see as the difference between ‘saying a prayer’ and ‘praying’?
* Which do you think Jesus was doing?

In response to the request for a lesson in prayer, Jesus teaches the disciples the prayer we now know as the Lord’s Prayer or the Our Father. Pray it slowly and prayerfully today.

*KT*

Thursday 12 October

Scriptures: Malachi 3: 13-20; Psalm 1; Luke 11: 5-13

*Jesus said, ‘Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’*

Jesus encourages his disciples (including us) to see God as a Father. For some people this is difficult as their experience of fatherhood has been abusive or damaging. Here Jesus can be seen to challenge those who see fatherhood as about power and harshness. Here he presents a relationship in which a child asks for something and the father gives what they need and not thinking it “funny” to give them something harmful instead. This responsible and loving fatherhood is what Jesus tries to convey as the way God wants to relate to us – giving us what we need and not the things that harm or hurt that people sometimes think are God’s will for them.

* What was – or is – your experience of fatherhood (either as a child of someone or as a father)?
* What responsibility do gospels like this place on fathers?

Pray today for fathers – that they will give a good model of fatherhood so that their children come to know and love God as the perfect Father.

*KT*

Friday 13 October (St Edward the Confessor)

Scripture: Joel 1: 13-15, 2: 1-2; Psalm 9A; Luke 11: 15-26

*Some of the people said, ‘He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.’ Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven.*

It seems strange that people are so perplexed about what Jesus is doing. He is clearly healing people and bringing goodness back into their lives but some people seem to be convinced that the origin of his healings is evil. This seems bizarre to us. Even those who probably acknowledged that Jesus was doing good are asking him for a sign that he is on heaven’s side which seems strange. But then, how often do we question the motives of people doing good – and wonder if it is for God or for themselves!

* When have you decided that someone is doing something good for their own ego rather than in the service of God?
* When have people made that judgement about you?

Pray today for people trying to work for the kingdom of God and who find themselves misunderstood or suspected of serving themselves rather than God. If you are in this position and find it painful, bring it into your time of prayer and share it with Jesus – knowing that he fully understands your position.

*KT*

Saturday 14 October – (St Callistus)

Scriptures: Colossians 1: 24-28; Psalm 95; Luke 11: 27-28

*Jesus said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!’*

At first sight this could be seen as a slight towards Mary who, after all offered her womb for the development of the embryo and foetus Jesus and who breast-fed him until he was old enough to be weaned. However, the reason she did this was more than just doing it – she did it because of the message of an angel. Hearing that motherhood was to be the way in which she was to obey the will of God, she accepted it whole-heartedly. She was blessed by being Jesus’ mother but even more blessed to have obeyed God’s word.

* How do you think Mary would have reacted to Jesus’ words?
* What sort of conversations did Jesus and Mary have about her hearing God’s word and obeying it?

Reflect today on the vital role Mary played in Jesus’ early life and how he may have looked back on those times as he grew up and seen great evidence of what obedience to God’s actually looked like in the woman who was closer to him than any other human being ever could be.

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