

Homily notes: (live recording at Mass will expand these):
30th August 2020 - 22nd Sunday in OT Year A 2020

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I doubt if few or any of us would want high political office wherever it is across the world these past months. Whatever they try to say and do is fraught with so much confusion and difficulty in the present pandemic that is and will be on-going for quite some time.

They could sympathise with Jeremiah, who in our 1st reading is bemoaning his fate. He blames God for seducing him into accepting a mission that brings only derision and reproach every day. He contemplates abandoning his office of prophet, but then, in an almost paroxysm of revulsion, admits that God's word is like a fire in his bones that he can neither hold in nor endure. Despite all this he knows God is with him, and that his persecutors will not triumph.

Of all the prophets Jeremiah appears the most plaintive and heartbroken of them, being burdened by his message which brings hostility, imprisonment torture and rejection by his own people. But that fire within him gave him strength to proclaim God's word.

Hence the psalm, '*For you my soul is thirsting O Lord my God.*' The Psalm is an individual lament, but the psalmist knows in all trouble that if we seek God's presence in the sanctuary we will receive comfort and help as we have in the past.

Picked up by St Paul in the 2nd reading, who, speaking to the believers, showing how the new life given by God to us expresses itself in action. In these 2 short verses, Paul appeals to us to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, modelling ourselves not on the behaviour, the culture of the world around us, but help shape it.

What we are living through, and have been for quite a long time, is a rejection of the Jewish/Christian culture which has shaped the western world over centuries, so like Jeremiah, we face the hostility and rejection of faith.

Ruth Kelly, a firm catholic, who apparently became the youngest ever cabinet minister when she was made Education Secretary at just 36 in Tony Blair's first government, interviewed this week, having been appointed by the Vatican to one of its councils. In an interview this week said; ***“In Britain there is a deep embedded hostility to religion, and Catholics get it in the neck more than others, and are an easy target for those who want religion kept out of politics.”***

Paul gives warning, instructing his readers not to follow the world with its obsession with wealth and status, but instead to offer themselves to God to live differently. A way which is the way of the Lord, which he lays before us in the gospel. The fundamental law which shaped Christ's ministry and therefore the vocation of all his true followers.

In a world where people have become estranged or rejected God and chosen self-centredness, the challenge of sheer goodness provokes the sharpest antagonism. Jesus knew that he would have to suffer and die if he were to be true to his commission

Peter's response seems to be one of love. It is a natural response to try to stop Jesus from suffering in the way he prophesies. But Jesus talks of a greater love than this. His death will be the ultimate act of love, and Peter must not get in the way. Jesus was, as I ever remind is the I crossed out. It costs us to do God's will.

Jesus is our suffering companion; he proves to be our strength; His power is mighty in our weakness. If the cross is the price to be paid for love, then carrying it is love's proof in action. For Jesus that is enough.

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