

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson

**13th November 2022 - 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Remembrance Sunday**

Readings (Year C): 1st: Malachi 3:19-20. Psalm: 97:5-9. 2nd: 2 Thess 3:7-12. **Gospel:** Luke 21:5-19.

We were looking at the Western Wall on the Temple Mount, we call it 'the wailing wall,' just a few days ago. In the vast square, which to enter there is a baggage check, were quite a few hundred soldiers, mainly men, but a few women on some passing out ceremony. Most looked in their late teens, maybe early 20's. **A reminder that Palestine is an occupied country**, and the Israelite government make life difficult for Palestinians.

The water for Palestinians can be cut off at will, most weeks for days at a time. The hotel we stayed at for a couple of nights at Taybeh, biblical Ephraim, where Jesus retired to after the raising of Lazarus, told us that water is often off 5 days out of 7. Borders/check points can be closed for days, just at their will.

In Bethlehem, the city is surrounded by an awful very high wall, something like 8 meters but the main check- point was closed all our time there, which meant long detours around to another check- point. Our driver and tour guide were both Christians and living in Bethlehem and spoke about their frustration daily.

Security clearance at the airport coming back took nearly 2 hours, all of which most people had to stand all that time. Because of the Government elections on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. all entry into Jerusalem was closed for 24 hours. Traffic, then horrendous with long diversions. Once they have voted the Israelis are free for the day, but not for anyone else. I had heard but reaffirmed in this month's Catholic Herald: 'Christians in Jerusalem are already beleaguered under pressure from militant Jewish groups, notably Ateret Cohanim who have purchased properties in sensitive areas of Christian East Jerusalem in order to assert that Jerusalem east and west is Jewish. They and other groups have shown no respect for Christian sensibilities in organising public festivities in the area.'

A Benedictine monk says rubbish is thrown regularly by activists into the church gardens every Saturday. He himself has been spat at and attacked. The cleric who runs the Armenian patriarchate says he was attacked outside his monastery and is regularly spat at. That low-level aggression is very different from the atmosphere when he first came to Jerusalem, when people were very hopeful of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. The Israeli government has been indifferent to Christian protests.

We couldn't believe the amount of plastic bottled water everywhere in the Holy Land, which is very necessary that everyone should drink at least 2 bottles a day, but as far as we could understand it wasn't recycled. We prayed, as I do frequently with the Psalmist for the peace of Jerusalem.

This year also on this Remembrance Sunday we have had the Ukraine invasion and war going on for about 9 months.

Jesus' words both about the Temple and the rest of the gospel are as ever highly relevant for a world in chaos. We do need to be aware of this and indeed so many other factors of the chaos in the world.

Yet the great thing that comes out of our pilgrimage and indeed the readings today is: **Jesus and he alone is the only answer.**

Our task is to bear witness to him. Not to be afraid with all that is going on, but doing, as his Mother Mary said at Cana, 'Do whatever he tells you.' What he tells is bear witness to him. A calm confidence in Jesus in the difficult days and years ahead.

**Jesus alone is our King.**