

Refecton for Wednesday 10th June 2020.

Father Paul and I were talking this morning about the rite of tonsuring. Father Paul remembers when he received the Tonsure at the seminary in Lisbon. It was a rite performed by the Bishop and was given when a seminarian entered the clerical state. In former times this Rite then meant that the seminarian was subject to Canon Law rather than Civil Law. The Bishop would cut the candidate's hair at the front, side and back and the rite was seen as a submission to Christ, in a similar way that in Greek and Roman times slaves had their heads shaved to show their submission to their owner. (I understand that the word tonsure comes from the latin tonsore which means to shave)

Why I mention this is that while the rite was being performed Psalm 15 was recited, which is the psalm of today's scripture readings: Reading the psalm in the context of handing over one's life totally to Christ gives it a particular meaning.

"O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;

It is you, yourself who are my prize.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight:

Since He is at my right hand I shall stand firm." (Psalm 15)

We know that for many of you these last days and weeks have been very emotional. There has been a sense of the loss of the familiar and what is dear to you, what one parishioner aptly described as
"not as things ought to be."

It remains true however that for those of us who cling to our Faith, sometimes by a cat's whisker, we know that God co-operates with all those who love Him and that He remains at the heart of all our hopes and desires. He will turn to our advantage all that we are experiencing at this present time, pain, suffering, depression, uncertainty, perplexity. He will do this because He wishes to lift our hearts in hope. Then the words of psalm 15 will resonate with us too..

You will show me the path of life,

The fulness of joy in your presence,

At your right hand happiness for ever." (Psalm 15)