

Living the Word

Romans 8: 28-30

The human desire to be in control of our lives and the things which touch our lives is a difficult one to suppress. We like to have a handle on everything that is going on in our lives in order not to be surprised when something occurs. This need to be prepared for any event often leads us into being nosey or gossiping in an inappropriate way. Paul's letter to the Church in Rome helps us to see that there are many occasions when we forget that God is in fact in control of what is going on. Therefore, even in times of strife and woe, we should trust that God can use whatever occurs to complete his purposes. When we feel as though we are out of control, perhaps those words of Teresa of Avila should be on our mind, urging God to work through our hands, our eyes, our feet, remembering that God's purposes are what must be fulfilled in the fulness of time.

Saints and Heroes

St John Vianney

The new parish priest is on his way to a new assignment at Ars near Lyons when a fog comes down. Undeterred he asks a shepherd boy to show him the road. Thanking him on their arrival he says: 'My young friend, you have shown me the way to Ars; I shall show you the way to heaven'. So effective at this was St John Vianney (1786-1859) that his church and confessional were overcrowded at a time of cynicism about religion in the wake of the French Revolution. As patron saint of priests St John reminds us of their heaven-pointing role by which Christ builds up and leads his Church, since they act for us 'in his person', to keep us on the heavenward path. A Christianity serving this world alone isn't the Christianity handed down to us by the saints.

Prayers to Remember

O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me forget myself entirely so to establish myself in you, unmovable and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing be able to trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my unchanging God, but may each minute bring me more deeply into your mystery! Grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action. Amen.

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, 1880-1906.

26th July
2020

The Seventh
Sunday after Trinity
17th Sunday
of the Year

The Kingdom is Like...



In Marlowe's great play 'Doctor Faustus', just as he is about to sell his soul to Lucifer, Faustus asks Mephistopheles; "How comes it then that thou art out of hell?" to which the devil's agent replies; "Why, this is hell nor am I out of it".

In the many passages of teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven, it becomes obvious that Christ uses everyday examples to show how, by ignoring the glorious kingdom God, we create our own hell around us. In Jesus' time, the place of eternal suffering was synonymous with 'gehenna' – basically the rubbish dump with an unquenchable fire, outside of a town or city.

Christ deliberately uses images that the people could see so as to make the Kingdom of God more accessible; a place we can identify with and participate in its establishment and growth. It is for us to read or listen to God's Word and, like the seed being sown around us, nurture and raise up spiritual crops to reap a harvest of the Christian life.

The innocence and simplicity of St Francis' message was that all around us is the beauty of God's Kingdom if we will but see. What frustrated Francis was that we look around us and see ugliness where there is beauty, decay where there is hope, and evil of our own making, when just beyond the darkness there is good and the fruit of Christ's teaching.

As Mephistopheles accepts he has created hell around him by ignoring God's Word, it is for us, therefore, to let the light of Christ dispel the darkness and establish God's Kingdom which surrounds us – if we have eyes to see.