

## *Sunday Thought*

**10th October 2021 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **Readings**

Job 23: 1 – 9, 16 - 17

Psalm 22: 1 - 15

Hebrews 4: 12 - 16

Mark 10: 17 - 31

### ***Jump in with Jesus***



I would love to know a little more about the man who came to Jesus in today's Gospel reading. There was certainly much more than we are told here. Very respectful towards the *good Rabbi*, he appears as a very agile, athletic young man, *running up and kneeling down* before the teacher. I wonder if he was a swimmer too? In spiritual terms at least, he couldn't swim! He was like many other people seeking faith in God, who feel as

though they are standing at the edge of the pool ... afraid to take the plunge. *'What do I do? What strokes shall I use? Do I jump or do I dive? How do I know I will float? Will I be able to keep my eyes open under water?'*.....

He wanted what he had seen and heard Jesus speaking about. *'I'm desperate to share what you have – to know more of what you call eternal life – to be at that place where the two dimensions of earth and heaven meet and intermingle – to have a full, wonderful life touched by the glory of God and to know that that life will go on for ever! I want to be in the Kingdom of God and to know the Kingdom is in me..... But how?'* Jesus welcomed and understood him. *'Well,'* is his answer. *'Let's start from where you are. You know the commandments and how important it is to live within the safety and guidance of them. You have seen how other people keep the rules of religion. You are well on the way'..* *'That's how I was brought up,'* the young man replied. *'Is that it? 'Just keep on in that way?'*

*'Oh!'* Jesus obviously knew more about him. *'There's just one more thing. You're too weighted down! You'll probably sink! So let go of everything you have. Sell it all and give the proceeds to the poor! And when you've done that, come and follow me.'* It was like Jesus standing with him at the pool-side saying *'Jump in! Trust me. We'll jump in together!'* Sadly, the enquirer left the edge of the pool as dry as when he first arrived.

The disciples were amazed by what Jesus said. *'Lord? Do you really mean give up everything? You are asking the impossible!'* Jesus assures them, *'You can never give to God more than he gives to you. With God everything is possible.'* Life in Christ is about letting him strip you down so he can jump in with you. That is "possible faith."

Hopefully these convenient service-sized bites of scripture from the lectionary leave us with a desire to read more, especially with Job's story. Today we hear him longing, like a man lost in the dark, *'I wish I knew where to find him!'* When we have read the whole story we learn how Job discovers that God whom he longs to confront with his questions, is actually looking for him – with the answers! God appears to him in *a dazzling glow of glory (37/22)* and says *'Job, I've been listening to you. Now you listen to me.'* Job responds, *'I know only what others have told me, but now I see you with my own eyes!'* He has come to a personal knowledge, even a friendship, with God. He is swimming!

The words from *Hebrews* are helpful here too. Not all Bible students agree, but I like to understand the writer's meaning when he speaks about *The Word of God*, not just as emphasizing the importance of the scriptures in both our spiritual and material life, but also with John's understanding of *'The Word became flesh in Christ.'* I read then how Jesus gets to the heart of our thoughts and desires – like a surgeon's scalpel – as he did with the young man who was searching for the Kingdom. He brings us too to the point where faith becomes *jumping in with Jesus*.

Christian literature and historical testimony are littered with stories of those who have found eternal life, not just by keeping the rules but in a personal relationship, which means jumping into life with "God of the everything is possible" – trusting Jesus.

#### *A Prayer (with Psalm 22 in mind)*

Lord God, I feel I have always known you.  
You have been there from my beginning.

I am sure you have always known me from my beginning, but there are times when I call out to you and feel you are not there.

When I have to trust your words, take my hand and help me let go of anything which holds me back from jumping into Kingdom life with you.

