

Sunday Thought

27th September 2020 26 in Ordinary Time

Readings

Exodus 17: 1 - 7

Psalms 78: 1 – 4, 12 - 16

Philippians 2: 1 - 13

Matthew 21: 23 – 32

Let God be God



This queue for water in India is pre-pandemic. Social distancing would make it three times as long! Whatever the disaster anywhere in the world the poorest always come off the worst and their life difficulties are exacerbated.

The reading this week from Exodus is about drought and water queues. It is the story of the mass movement of at least a million people who have been set free from oppression in ancient Egypt. They are on their way to becoming a new nation – the people of God. Their journey will take them forty years and their constant movement is dictated by the reaction of their neighbours and their need for water. At this point they are scattered across the south of the Sinai peninsular in barren desert-land and prohibited from reaching springs of water by the hostility of the Amalekite people. Social distancing was no problem for them but waiting and queueing for water was. It was understandable that many resorted to blaming God for taking them out of one disaster into another. Moses however made it clear that their hope is to stay with God and wait for his next move .. then be ready to follow his guidance – together. Miracles aside, for they are everyday occurrences, Moses' answer applies to most, if not all our difficult life situations.

The search for water is a daily problem all across the world. There are about 800 million people worldwide without access to clean water. Climate change is recognised as a major contributory factor in the search for water. This week the Prince of Wales addressing the Climate Week meeting in New York emphasised that swift action is required to avoid an approaching climate catastrophe. Moses' answer to drought in south Sinai is relevant here too.

We believe that God's amazingly intricate and beautiful creation is a gift to us but it has to be used and lived in according to his rules. At the moment we learn the way through the present pandemic is for everyone to keep the rules. For sure that applies to climate change as well. Excellent advice about that is given us in this week's readings. The psalm begins with a reminder of the wonderful things God has done and the importance and holding to our learned wisdom for the sake of future generations. The apostle Paul writing to the church in Philippi uses a great hymn of praise for Jesus as a starting point for living the Christian rule of love. It involves:

*Being united in thinking and praying;
Sharing kindness and compassion;
Living selflessly – always having others in mind;
Living humbly - with no great desire for wealth and power;
And above all: Let God be God – don't try to take his place!*

To round it all off, Jesus' gospel story about a father and his two sons is a salutary warning about making promises and doing nothing!

A PRAYER

Sorry Lord, I let the wind snatch a plastic bag from my hand and drop it into the stream's fast flowing waters on their way to the sea where it will be broken into a million toxin destroyers of your earth's life.

Thank you Lord, I watched the young gathers in their yellow gloves and jackets, picking plastic rubbish from the beach – building Kingdom hope in minute acts of forgiving, visionary love.

Another thought: One person dies every 30 seconds from diseases caused by plastic pollution and rubbish. (*Tear Times*)