

Mass Times

Sundays: 9 am & 11 am
Saturday Vigil: 6.00 pm
Tuesday & Friday: 9.30 am
Fr. Michael Keohane Co-PP



The Conversion of St Paul

Malcolm Guite

An enemy whom God has made a friend,
 A righteous man discounting righteousness,
 Last to believe and first for God to send,
 He found the fountain in the wilderness.

Thrown to the ground and raised at the same moment,
 A prisoner who set his captors free,
 A naked man with love his only garment,
 A blinded man who helped the world to see,
 A Jew who had been perfect in the law,
 Blesses the flesh of every other race
 And helps them see what the apostles saw;
 The glory of the lord in Jesus' face.

Strong in his weakness, joyful in his pains,
 And bound by love, who freed him from his chains.

Francois Mauriac wrote in his life of Jesus: */It is baffling to record that, for a period of thirty years, the Son of Man did not appear to be anything other than a man./ Those who lived with him thought they knew him. He fixed their tables and chairs. They ate and drank with his extended family. When he stepped outside the role they had fixed for him, they put him down as just a workman.*

Lord, there are depths in each of us, even those we think we know well, that only you can glimpse. A put-down tells more about the speaker than about the victim. Save me, Lord, from such folly.

Opposition never stopped Jesus. Even when they resisted his message and gave out about his family, he went ahead, going to other small villages, the wandering teacher. His message possessed him.

The wisdom of Jesus came from heaven and earth. He had a calm way of seeing the meaning in things and events. This was born of earth and of his divine origin in heaven. People couldn't accept the ordinariness of Jesus - that he grew up in a normal family which was named and well-known in Nazareth. Sometimes we find it hard to see the grace of God near to us, under our noses as it were. In the ordinariness of life and of love, of misunderstanding and hurt, of care and compassion, the grace of God and the love of God are active and alive.

Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth only to be met with scepticism in spite of all the miracles he has performed. It is both Jesus' wisdom and his mighty works that puzzle his relatives and the people of his home town. We often judge others people because we think we know them. Perhaps we really don't.

A brief introduction on Sunday's readings

First reading Ezekiel 2:2-5

People who remind us of awkward truths or realities are often unwelcome. This is true today and we can all think of examples in the current climate. It was true in the past as well: true for Jesus in his day and true for Ezekiel as well.

Second reading 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

It is encouraging to hear that even a great believer like Paul has to struggle with personal challenges. He mentions today the "thorn in the flesh". No one really knows what this was. For us today, the important thing is to learn from how he dealt with it.

Gospel Mark 6:1-6a

This is a remarkable story, which gives rise to many questions! It has, however, the ring of truth to it. It is often the case that our familiarity blinds us to the gifts and charisms of others.

Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart - Pilgrimage to Knock Sunday 21 July 2024:

The Pioneer Pilgrimage to Knock will take place on Sunday 21 July. Mass at 3pm will be followed by Eucharistic Blessing and Procession to the Shrine. Pioneers along with friends and relations of people who are living "one day at a time" with addiction are welcome.

Ordinary Little Nazareth

When Jesus returned to his hometown, Nazareth, his reception was disappointing to say the least. People had heard about extraordinary things he did in other towns. He was invited to speak in the local synagogue and initially most of the people were astonished when they heard him.

But soon the negative people and cynics began to spread the seeds of doubt.

They advised people to hold on a while before they made any commitment. "This is the carpenter and we know all his family and relations. A nice man, a decent carpenter but he is getting notions above his station. People in other towns don't really know him so they fell for his notions." Local begrudgery won the day.

Jesus quoted an old saying that no prophet is accepted by his own people. The problem was that in their eyes he was too ordinary.



BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Church Gate collection will take place on
Week ending 13/14 July 2024
 Your support as always is greatly appreciated.

Observations

The resilience of Paul

Throughout the letters, it is evident that Paul was a happy, even joy-filled believer. This does not mean that he had a trouble-free life — on the contrary. In later life, reflecting back on his ministry, Paul occasionally offers what scholars call "Hardships Lists". In the preceding chapter in the same second letter to the Corinthians, for example, he writes in some detail:

Are they servants of Christ? (I am talking like I am out of my mind!) I am even more so: with much greater labours, with far more imprisonments, with more severe beatings, facing death many times. Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with a rod. Once I received a stoning. Three times I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I spent adrift in the open sea. I have been on journeys many times, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from robbers, in dangers from my own countrymen, in dangers from Gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers from false brothers, in hard work and toil, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, many times without food, in cold and without enough clothing. (2Corinthians 11:23-27)

You can feel the intensity. And yet Paul remains a joy-filled follower of the Way.

All this means is that behind the brief, intense second reading, lie two key "stories": at a first level, there is the story of Paul himself — how he came to be a believer and the apostle to the Gentiles; at a much deeper level, there is the foundational story of Jesus.

Paul never did let go of the apparent absurdity of the cross, except that the Christ-believing Paul came a profound realisation of God's "project" in Jesus, God's compassionate solidarity, God's faithfulness, God's forgiveness and love. Such faith helped Paul make sense of his own sufferings — as a time of grace, as a call to faithfulness.

The Papers Say.....

Irish Catholic. (1). Lead singer of The Script finds solace in daily Mass after death of guitarist. (2) A Eucharistic revival is urgently needed as Mass attendances drop post-Covid. (3). Being Catholic and young —. Youth life in the Church. (4) The messianic appeal of Taylor Swift. (5). Fr. Martin Delaney: Schools have become a symbol of our island's changes.

Sacred Heart Messenger. (1). Brid Kennedy of concern worldwide: Compassion is vital to our survival. (2). Fr. Peter McVerry: Law & Order and Addiction. (3). Realigning dioceses —. Fr. Vincent Sherlock take a look at the effects of the recent realignment of western dioceses and gives a response to another articles. (4) Archbishop Dermot Farrell open up on the on the meaning of Jesu' command 'Do this in memory of me'.

Tablet of 22/6. (1) Crisis in West Africa —. Will Liberia find its voice? (2). The gift of priesthood. — Thank you, Father. (3) Church diplomacy — Blessed are the peacemakers. (4). Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark diocese: Embedding Synodality in Church will be a slow burn.

Thought for the day

Familiarity breeds...well, sometimes blindness. We do need familiarity—we couldn't be working things out for the first time all of the time. What is regular and known can help us get on with the day or the job or the relationship. But there are times—we all have them —when sheer familiarity impedes our understanding and prevents our encounter with the new, the different and the radical. Our case is, perhaps, the diametric opposite of that of the people of Nazareth. Our too comfortable faith familiarity with Jesus can hinder us from seeing the radical, the new, the disturbing. Sometimes a bit of defamiliarisation would be good for us!!

Prayer

Lord, take away dull familiarity and shake us up that we may ask ourselves honestly, "Who then is this?" Amen.

K O'Mahony OSA

Reflections

1. The story reminds us of how personal prejudices and agendas can block us from listening to the content of what another person has to say, no matter how relevant or wise it is. Perhaps you have experienced this? What difference has it made to you when you were able to focus on the content of what was being said and leave to one side your own prejudices about the speaker?

2. It has been said that there is nothing as useless as the right advice at the wrong time. We may want to reach out to another, but may be unable to make a useful contribution because at that moment the other person is not ready to be helped. Like Jesus we can "do no deed of power". As Jesus had to be patient and wait for another opportunity so do we. What have you learned about the importance of patience in working with other people?

3. The topic of religion can easily bring up prejudices, leading some to dismiss religion as superstition, old hat, or based on an outdated world view. Even among believers, prejudice can make it hard for individuals to listen to an alternative way of looking at things, to consider a different way of celebrating liturgy, or to live at peace with difference. Yet a closed mind can lead to a stagnant faith. When have you found that a willingness to consider a different perspective led to a deepening and strengthening of your faith?

PRAYER

God of the prophets, in every age you send the word of truth, familiar yet new, a sign of contradiction. Let us not be counted among those who lack faith, but give us the vision to see Christ in our midst and to welcome your saving word. We make this prayer though Christ our Lord. Amen.

If you would like to receive a weekly commentary on the Weekly Scripture Readings, both in AUDIO, VIDEO and in PDF, please log on to www.tarsus.ie and register to receive the emails.

Sunday Cuppa continues in the Parish Centre after 11 am mass on 7th July for tea and refreshments and more chat! Cheaper than the Village!! Everyone welcome!

