

Homily

8 Sunday (A)

26 Feb 2017

Is this an optimistic gospel - *'all these other things will be given you as well'* or pessimistic *'every day has enough trouble of its own'*? Is it world-affirming *'think of the flowers that are growing in the field'*, or world-denying, *'You cannot be the slave of both God and money'*?

Is St Paul on one of his bouts of self-justification - *'my conscience does not reproach me at all'* or is this the ultimate humility, *'the Lord alone is my judge'*?

Is Isaiah a kind of pre-Christian feminist - *'Does a woman forget her baby at the breast or fail to cherish the son of her womb'*? - or would it be wrong to press such a 21st Century agenda on to such an ancient text?

And what kind of Lent are you going to keep - giving up lots of stuff and taking on lots of stuff or a more spiritual and internal journey?or maybe just trying to survive the stresses and strains of everyday life..?

The God of Holy Scripture, the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ has a wonderful way of holding all these together. There is no one-size-fits-all.

'Look at the birds in the sky....are you not worth much more than they are?' This is a unique tailor-made spirituality for each one of us, our own way of praying and our own way of keeping Lent.

But one thing they all have in common is Jesus the Lord, whether I am happy or sad, rich or poor, he is the one that I seek, he is the one that I must trust. No spiritual discipline however rigorous will, of itself, bring us the peace we so much crave. Only Jesus himself can do that. *'In God alone is my soul at rest.'*

One of the great spiritual masters Jean-Pierre de Caussade talks about the sacrament of the present moment. Just as in a few moments you will come to the altar to receive Holy Communion, so we should try to treasure every single moment of our lives. Every breath, every heartbeat, every moment is Jesus. In sickness and in health, in the nice things and the difficult things, Jesus is there. Be aware of that presence. Maybe just say his name over and over.

Jesus, I trust you. Jesus, I love you. Jesus, have mercy.

Fr Michael