



Fr Michael says:

Jesus, the Way the Truth and the Life

Today we take responsibility for our situation in the world because Jesus is no longer WITH us is but IN us. We need to understand the reality of Jesus' invitation of service, of the washing in the feet which has immediately preceded this text. For John the Eucharist is replaced by this commitment to service: each of us is TAKEN, BLESSED, BROKEN AND SHARED to do this and thereby follow Jesus, who is our all. Our first Reading emphasises how this is done in the early life of the Christian Community in Jerusalem. The Gospel is introduced by Peter's putting before us the responsibility and dignity of who we are, as members of this Community.

When things get dark for us and we need our faith to carry us through – and to accept what is happening even if we do not understand it. Here we see the reality of what is our faith, as it is easy to live it when all is going well. How strong is our trust in God? This is indeed, the ultimate question! We should avoid thinking that because we are living our faith, then it should all be plain sailing!

Passover was a great family and community event, lived with joy and hope for the coming of the Messiah, but Jesus is inviting them to say "goodbye" to Him, through being betrayed and put to death: how can this be??? In a crisis we always feel abandoned, even by God! Yet Jesus invites us to carry on trusting in God and Himself, as He leads us on the way to the Kingdom, which He is preparing for us. We are invited to see a purpose in what is happening. The unbearable becomes bearable; in the midst of darkness, a light appears. Real faith helps us see God in the midst of it all. Like the victim in a concentration camp who replies to the question of a guard: "Now where is your God?" "He is here with me in this degradation!" Life takes on the fullness of meaning with God; the unendurable is made bearable with faith!

As Ghandi, the Indian pacifist put it: "A person with a grain of faith in God never loses hope. He believes in the ultimate triumph of truth." It is a going home and like the young man who had fallen out from his family for years and in prison, had a change of heart, but did not know how to get in touch, except by letter, to see if they still wanted him back. He asked them to put a white ribbon on the old apple tree at the end of the garden, which gave onto the railway line. He was so nervous when he was on the train, he told his story to the man next to him and as they got near to his home, he could not bear the tension, and asked the man to look for him. "Young man, he said, look!" The tree was festooned with ribbons; he broke down and sobbed out all the bitterness of the past. The man said he had witnessed a miracle in seeing how important home was to this young lad: it is the same for us in our journey of life!