

Readings Isaiah 35: 4-7; James 2: 1-5; Mark 7: 31-37



Fr Michael says:

Facing the reality of the Migrants

Europe, by and large, has failed the migrants and their plight! Isaiah puts before us the reality of the Jewish People being migrants to Babylon, strangers in a foreign land. He wants to bring them hope and courage: “Do not be afraid! Look your God is coming – He is coming to save you.”

James is very aware of this attitude even in the Christian Community, us and them between rich and poor, other nationalities and cultures who join us. “God chose those who were poor according to be rich in faith and in the kingdom.”

Mark’s vivid story is powerful indeed, in the respectful and caring approach to the deaf and dumb man, who is rejected by society, because of his condition. Jesus Himself is a stranger in a foreign land. Jesus’ shows his gentleness and respect in taking him aside, rather than a public spectacle and brought comfort and healing in a caring way. The man feels wanted and can come back into the community again. A wonderful message for us and our attitude.

The Readings bring comfort, they remind us that God is always close to those who suffer, are excluded or marginalised. He is close to all those we have mentioned earlier. We are called to enable people to feel wanted through a warm welcome and a feeling of belonging to our Community. We are called therefore to be a prophetic community, identifying the causes of exclusion from our communities, whether it is racial or ethnic prejudice, the feeling of being swamped by so many come into our Society!

There are five basic conditions to ensure a good, peaceful and harmonious society, using many of the Covenant values and ideals: love, compassion, integrity; perseverance, self-control, hard work and give and take approach. Jonathan Sachs sums in these words that we must never forget that we have been strangers ourselves in our Catholicism, a situation that is now much changed, but we still experience it now in the way faith and belief is mocked and ignored and prejudice is very noticeable in these attitudes. He says: “These features (the five principles), then, form the shared language of morality. They arise from the human situation as such, and from our five needs: for association, persistence, the peaceful resolution of conflict, handing on to the future what the past has handed on to us and the space to be different and yet included. Without them no society can long survive, for it will fail to honour the human spirit, against which no force can prevail indefinitely!”