

Tuesday of 5th Week of Lent 2020 – Obedience

One of the great, even greatest, challenges of our times comes from the commercialism and materialism of society. It has led us to see people largely as economic units. How much are you worth, what contribution do you make to society, etc. etc? This understanding of people as tools for production has been extended even more savagely with regards to our creation. Creation has been completely reduced to its economic value - in what it can produce - and this has led us into slowly destroying it. Any misuse of creation is sinful so none of us can hold up our heads and say we are innocent. The present pandemic, however, has shown us that we are not all conquering, not all powerful. Like the Israelites in the desert with Moses; when the chips are down and the way ahead seems endless and insurmountable, we turn to God. Fortunately, God is not dismissive of our pleas and readily responds to our needs, whatever our faults. Instead of looking at a bronze serpent, God has asked us to follow the precautions outlined for staying safe and as far as possible prevent the spread of Covid-19. We are asked to do this not only for our own protection but for the protection of those around us, for the common good and the health of society. Jesus makes it very clear today that he always sought to do the Father's will and proved it later by his death and resurrection. He did this out of obedience because of his love for God and for neighbour - for what we would call the common good. Jesus speaks to us in the gospel in his humanity and with the knowledge that he had the possibility of saving us from eternal death and winning us life. His obedience was an obedience of love. In our obedience to the instructions around Covid-19, fortunately, we are also protecting creation and ceasing to abuse it. In our daily constitutionals, we have time to see the budding beauty and beginnings of new life in the gardens, fields, hedges and trees around us, being reminded of creation's inherent beauty. We will overcome this virus through obedience - and life will eventually return to normal. Obedience, however, calls us to continue to show greater care for creation into the future so that the wonderful beauty of God may be seen in all its splendour.

Out cycling I have the privilege of seeing the growth of wild flowers in the hedgerows and grassy banks. Not sure why they are called **wild** because they look rather sedate and dignified with the occasional flutter in the wind. **A chap gives**

flowers to all of his family. To his wife he gives roses, to his parents he gives orchids, to his daughters he gives daisies. And to his sons, he gives sunflowers!!