

Reflection Thursday Week 24 – 2020

Will you and I be able to say with St Paul, as we look back on our lives, *the grace of God has not been fruitless*? We encountered Christ in our baptism even if, for many of us, it happened when we were too small to realise. In that encounter, like St Paul, we too were given a mission to be an apostle. We call ourselves evangelisers, bringers of Good News, bearers of Christ, and instruments of his grace, love, mercy and goodness. Jesus does not tell us how but trusts us to fulfil our mission as best we can. We can be certain, like St Paul, that Jesus gave us the grace and power we need to fulfil our mission. What we often seem to lack is the courage to fulfil our mission as well as we could. The woman in the Gospel, someone despised by many in the town, certainly did not lack courage. She was not put off coming to Jesus, who was eating in revered company, and bowing down at his feet seeking mercy and forgiveness. She does this publicly, hoping not only to be forgiven by Jesus but to show she wished to amend her ways and be forgiven by the people of the town. We have no difficulty in believing that the mercy of Jesus was forthcoming; forgiveness from the local people was not. Jesus not only forgives her but, just as the women sought forgiveness publicly, Jesus forgives her publicly, showing the people that if God forgives her then so must they. There must a lesson somewhere in all this for us???

Pope Francis: *The theme of the Season of Creation is **Jubilee for the Earth**. A Jubilee is a time to turn back in repentance. We have broken the bonds of our relationship with the Creator, with our fellow human beings, and with the rest of creation. We need to heal the damaged relationships that are essential to supporting us and the entire fabric of life. This Jubilee calls us to think again of our fellow human beings, especially the poor and the most vulnerable. We are asked to re-appropriate God's original and loving plan of creation as a common heritage, a banquet which all of our brothers and sisters share in a spirit of conviviality, not in a competitive scramble but in joyful fellowship, supporting and protecting one another. It is a time for setting free the oppressed and all those shackled in the fetters of various forms of modern slavery, including trafficking in persons and child labour. . .*

After 40 years of hard work, a man retired with £5 million which he had gained through courage, diligence, initiative, skill, devotion to duty, thrift, efficiency, and shrewd investment. . . And the death of an uncle who left him all but £5 short of 5 million pounds!