

Reflection Wednesday Week 26 – St Jerome 2020

St Jerome (340) was born in Dalmatia. He studied in Rome where he was baptized. Attracted by the ascetic life, he travelled to the East, where he was (unwillingly) ordained a priest. Recalled to Rome he acted as secretary to Pope Damasus, but on the Pope's death he returned to Bethlehem, where he founded a monastery, a hospice, and a school, and worked on translating the Bible into Latin. He wrote many works, including letters and commentaries on Holy Scripture. In the face of barbarian invasions and internal dissension in the Church, he helped the refugees and those in need. He died in Bethlehem 420.

Despite his utter desolation, Job was still able to recognise and proclaim the glory of God. Maybe it was because of his desolation that Job recognised the greatness of God. Could we say the same in the face of the current pandemic and threat of further lockdowns???

Blaming God for the pandemic is more the claim of non-believers although some regard it as a punishment. However, as Jesus suggests, if we put God first in our lives, we will better understand and appreciate how God is present and watching over us. Despite the temptation to think that in following Jesus we must leave all that we value behind, the reality is far, far different. Remember the saying *"Absence makes the heart grow fonder"*. The pandemic, which has prevented us from visiting our loved-ones easily or not at all, has revealed the truth of this saying. Know that *"putting God first, you never come second!"*

Following Jesus is about entering more fully into life not leaving people behind. Pope Francis says that *"becoming a disciple of Christ is a free and deliberate choice, made out of love, to reciprocate the inestimable grace of God. Jesus wants us to be passionate about Himself, and about the Gospel in a way that results in concrete actions of love toward our most needy brothers and sisters."*

Caring for Creation

Most High, good Lord, you revealed to St. Francis
that You are Father of all creation
and that all creatures are related as brothers and sisters.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun who is the day,
and through whom You give us light.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
Brother Wind, Sister Water and Brother Fire.

And praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and produces varied fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.

Grant us, Lord, the grace
to see Your beauty and likeness in created things
that we may follow St. Francis
in showing care for creation. Amen.

- adapted by Br. Cathal Duddy from *"The Canticle of the Creatures"* by St. Francis of Assisi

A Brief one . . . I don't think anyone saw a worldwide pandemic happening this year. I guess most people don't have 2020 vision.