

Reflection Thursday Week 1 – 2021

Hebrews writes: The Holy Spirit says: *If only you would listen to him today; do not harden your hearts, as happened in the Rebellion, on the Day of Temptation in the wilderness, when your ancestors challenged me and tested me, though they had seen what I could do for forty years. That was why I was angry with that generation and said: How unreliable these people who refuse to grasp my ways! And so, in anger, I swore that not one would reach the place of rest I had for them.* Do you believe the Holy Spirit would say this about God? Does God's anger ever push him to punish us for our waywardness, our hardness of heart? If anything, we believe God's mercy is far greater than anger and punishment. We would think of God's anger more in terms of anger at injustice, cruelty, abuse of people, abuse of the planet, abuse of power. We would also believe that all punishment was a consequence or result of evil and not necessarily our own. Those who are flaunting the Lockdown rules are causing the suffering and death of the innocent because of their selfish thoughtlessness. God's anger is ironically a loving anger. He does not want to see us harming ourselves. He sent his Son Jesus to us out of love not out of anger, to free us from the grip of evil that causes unnecessary suffering and death. It is God's anger that motivates God to act in love and mercy towards us. Although the cured leper in the gospel did not heed Jesus warning, which consequently made Jesus' life more difficult, Jesus did not take back his healing. It may, in fact, have helped Jesus because people came to him, he did not have to go to them. That is a true example of Love and a sign of the power of love to draw people to God.

A woman comes running to the doctor shouting and screaming in pain *"Please doctor, you've got to help me. I've been stung by a bee."*

DOCTOR: *"Don't worry; I'll put some cream on it."*

WOMAN: *"You will never find that bee. It must be miles away by now."*

DOCTOR: *"No, you don't understand! I'll put some cream on the place you were stung."*

WOMAN: *"Oh! It happened in the garden where I was sitting under a tree."*

DOCTOR (in anger): *"No, no, you IDIOT! I mean on which part of your body did that bee sting you."*

WOMAN (still screaming in pain): *"On my finger! The bee stung me on my finger and it really hurts."*

DOCTOR (banging his fist and shouting even louder): *"Which one?"*

WOMAN (innocently): *"How am I to know? All bees look the same to me."*