

Reflection Monday Holy Week 2021

The psalmist reminds us that: *The Lord is my light and my help. The Lord is the stronghold of my life. I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Hope in the Lord.* These could well have been the prayers of Jesus in the few days before his impending death. He would have needed all the reassurance he could get. The Gospel refers to plots within plots and each with a certain independence and yet all relating to Jesus. Through it all Jesus points out that intentions are truly important and that altruistic intentions trump all others. Without a doubt Jesus' intentions were always altruistic. He sought to fulfil the will of his Father out of Love rather than obedience. He sought to free us from all evil and most especially from death. He makes it clear, too, that unless he takes first place in our lives, not to the exclusion of others, we will never be able to reach out to others as fruitfully or be able to offer the hope and joy we desire to give. Placing Jesus first helps us be more altruistic just like he was and is.

Many years ago, a king on his travels came upon a very old woman who was diligently tending to some trees she had recently planted. Her hard work impressed the king, but it also concerned him because she was doing it in the heat of the day.

The regent dismounted and offered his assistance, but his subject politely declined his offer and continued working. As they talked, she explained that she had only recently planted some fig trees and that this early work was some of the most important to ensure their long-term health.

The king asked her when the fruit would be ready to eat. The old woman explained that for the best, most flavoursome fruit, it would be several years. The king marvelled to himself, *"This woman is very old, and she is working very hard. Will she even be around to enjoy the fruit of her labour?"*

The elderly woman perceived the king's worried thoughts and said, *"The work I do today won't show any results for several years, but the fruit we enjoy eating today is only possible because of the people who planted, watered, and tended other fig trees many years ago."* In like manner, the blessings we delight in today are the result of the actions of those who have preceded us, and our good works today help lay the foundation for others to have a better tomorrow. like Jesus!