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Sunday : 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Matthew 16:13-20

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Phillipi he put this question to his disciples, “Who do people say the son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But you”, he said, “who do you say I am?” Then Simon Peter spoke up, “You are the Christ,” he said, “the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Simon, son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.” Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Gospel Reflection : In Whose Image Have We Made God - His Or Ours?

God can never be controlled, packaged or put into a form which just suits us.

God is always revealing his presence unexpectedly, and sometimes using people and events we would not choose. He seems to ask outrageous things of his followers, and provides, coaxes and supports till they are achieved.

Time and again the impossible gets done. For God is vaster, and closer, than we ever realised. And putting our belief in Him is the most profound, far-reaching step we can ever take.

Peter was prepared to take that step. He had glimpsed something of the power and compassion, so difficult to understand but which can change our lives. If Jesus of Nazareth is none other than God himself, then we have such hope as was never possible before.

For we now know, whoever we are, that not only are we all loved, but we are lovable too.

Notices

We remember in our prayers Joe Molden whose Requiem Mass is at St. Teresa's on Thursday, 27th August at 1 pm, and Andrew Baker whose Funeral Service is at St. Teresa's on Friday, 28th August at 2.30 pm We remember them and their families, and all those whose anniversaries are at this time. May they be in God's peace.

A Big Thank You to everyone, who can do, for wearing your masks, and for keeping to the hand-washing, trace and tracking, and social distancing regulations in church in such an orderly and helpful way. A very big thank you too to those who have been helping you when you arrive at

church, and those who stay behind to clean the used benches when you leave. Without all your cooperation we would not be able to open our churches.

The World Day Of Prayer For The Care Of Creation, and The Season Of Creation :

Pope Francis established 1 September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in 2015, encouraging the Catholic community around the world to pray for our common home.

The day is inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which calls on "every person living on this planet" to care for our shared Earth. He calls us all to celebrate this opportune moment to "reaffirm [our] personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation, as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live."

This World Day of Prayer this year begins the Season of Creation, which runs until 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi. This is an ecumenical season dedicated to prayer for the protection of creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.

The key messages from Pope Francis include the following:

- We are called to protect creation—and we are missing the mark. "*Something good* in the eyes of God has become *something exploitable* in human hands."
- The Season of Creation is a time for prayer in nature. "This is the *time to re-acquaint ourselves with praying* immersed in nature, where our gratitude to the creator God arises spontaneously."
- The Season of Creation is a time to grow in sustainability. "This is the *time to reflect on our lifestyles* . . . Let's change and adopt simpler and more respectful lifestyles!"
- The Season of Creation is a time to urge governments to enact better climate policies. "This is *the time to take prophetic actions*" and governments have the task of "demonstrating political will to drastically hasten their measures to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible . . . in line with the Paris Agreement goals."

"There are many resources available to help us, including through CAFOD, www.cafod.org.uk."

Daily Reflections for this week

Monday (Jon Sobrino, SJ)

I want to say of Archbishop Romero that he believed in God just as Jesus did. As with Jesus, to be in communion with God, to speak with God and to speak about God meant above all for Romero making God's will real and effective. Like Jesus he sought and found God's will in the minutiae of everyday life as in life's most profound and significant moments. He never made of God's will something trivial or routine.

Scripture (Psalm 89:15-16, 20-21,24,26)

How blessed the nation that learns to acclaim you! They will live, Lord, in the light of your presence. In your name they rejoice all day long, by your saving justice they are raised up. I have found David my servant, and anointed him with my holy oil. My hand will always be with him, my arm will make him strong. My constancy and faithful love will be with him, in my name his strength will be triumphant. He will cry to me "You are my Father, my God, the rock of my salvation."

Tuesday (Cardinal Basil Hume)

False prophets in our time are the siren voices which help to create an atmosphere, a way of thinking. There is a growing realisation that our Western society has lost its direction and is losing confidence in the guides who have led from one disaster to another. I sense that people everywhere are longing for a new direction. That should not surprise us, for people are made for God. Without God human life remains an enigma. The deepest hopes and desires of the human heart remain unfulfilled.

Scripture (Matthew 16:13-17)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon, son of Jonah, you are a blessed man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.'

Wednesday (H. Butterfield, 'History and Human Relations')

One of the most solemn facts in all history – one of the most significant for anyone who cares to ponder over it – is the fact that Jesus Christ was not merely murdered by hooligans in a country road; he was condemned by everything that was most respectable in that day, everything that pretended to be most righteous – the religious leaders, the authority of the Roman Government, and even the democracy itself which shouted to save Barabbas rather than Christ.

Scripture (Dt. 9:12-13,17-18)

When you have eaten all you want, when you have built fine houses to live in, when you have seen your silver and gold abound and all your possessions grow great, do not become proud of heart. Beware of thinking to yourself "My own strength and the might of my own hand have given me the power to act like tis." Remember Yahweh your God; he was the one who gave you strength to act like this.

Thursday (Jean Vanier)

The people who carry final authority in a community are always, in a sense, alone. This loneliness is their cross, but it is also the guarantee of presence, light and the strength of God. That is why they, more than anyone else in the community, must have time to be alone with God. It is in these moments of solitude that inspiration is born in them and they will sense what direction to take. They must have confidence in these intuitions, especially if they are accompanied by a deep peace.

Scripture (Ephesians 2:7-10)

God raised us up with Christ to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how extraordinarily rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith, not by anything of your own but by a gift from God; not by anything you have done, so nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good works which God has already designated make up our way of life.

Friday (Bede Griffiths)

The church was originally a community of the Spirit. People who received the gift of the Spirit dedicated their lives to prayer. Neither serving nor preaching is good if you are not praying. If you have not got Christ within, you cannot give him to others. You can put words and doctrines before people, but that is not preaching the Gospel. It is only when you have the Gospel and Christ within that you can communicate it to others.

Scripture(Galatians1:11-15)

Now I want to make it quite clear that the Gospel that was preached by me was no human message. It was not from any human being that I received it but it came to me through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You have surely heard how I lived in the past and how there was no limit to the way I persecuted the church of God. But God, who had set me apart from the time when I was in my mother's womb, called me through his grace and chose to reveal his Son in me so that I should preach him to the gentiles.

Martin Bennett