



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 13 February 2022

Epiphany 6

Jesus calls us to work with him to build a world of peace and happiness. Today we ask for the spirit of discernment to help us to recognise the choices we have to make if we are to be the people God wants us to be.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."
Luke 6:20

An Illustration to set the scene

A Sufi tale tells of a man who built a lighthouse in the middle of a desert, to much derision.

When it was complete, however, and began to spin, sending light in every direction, it seemed as if the Milky Way had turned into a carousel.

A sea appeared, illuminated by a river of light with ships and whales and dolphins.

Everyone was amazed except the lighthouse builder.

He knew that if someone turns on a light in the darkness, the brightness of that light will bring about many wonders.

Many people, of course, will think that this is a stupid idea. Who builds a lighthouse in the desert?

However, with a little imagination, we can begin to see that there are deserts for us to experience other than those made of sand.

It may be the deserted places of our own heart in which we experience great loneliness.

It may be the bright lights of a shopping centre, with its promise of happiness that is in reality only a mirage.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

In today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus say that those whose lives are replete with every "good" thing are simply setting themselves up for disappointment.

The time will come for them to lose it all. ----- But those who have nothing are the heirs to the kingdom of God: the hungry will be satisfied; the sad filled with joy and laughter; the persecuted, those cast out by society, will enjoy the fullness of life in heaven.

The prophet Jeremiah also helps us to see this.

The ones who think that human beings have all the answers to life's questions will find in the end that what they believe will turn to dust.

Everything they trusted to give them life will dry up like a desert stream.

On the other hand, those who trust in God and build their lives on God's word will find that what looks like a dry and empty space, by human standards, will, in fact, be transformed.

The desert will become a garden for them.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

In such a world of stark contrasts it is easy to label all the wealth of the developed world as “bad”, and the poverty and deprivation of the developing world as “good”.

However, in the desert that is our modern world, we need a lighthouse to help us distinguish just what is true, and how God wants us to live.

Jesus says in John’s Gospel (8:12), *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”*

The truth is that all of us are invited to be part of the project of Jesus, to bring light into the world.

We are called to be continually enlightened by Christ so that our light can shine brightly.

Jesus teaches us how to live by loving God with everything we have and by loving our neighbour as ourselves.

The light of Jesus helps us to discern what we are to do in any situation: how to put our neighbour’s needs before our own; how to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us.

Jesus calls us to a new scale of values whereby we define success not by the letters after our name or our bank balance.

The true success of our life will lie in our becoming the person that God created us to be, and that person is an image of Jesus.

At first sight, the desert might seem to be dead. There are no signs of life.

But when the rain does fall, when wells are dug, when gardens are planted and irrigated, suddenly the desert springs to life.

This has got to be our hope; that the world is not beyond redemption.

Jesus calls us to be people of faith, people with a vision, people who are prepared to build lighthouses in the desert, from where his light can give a new vision of what humanity is meant to be.

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

Luke 6:20

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God’ spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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