



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

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



For Sunday 10 April 2022

Lent 6 – Palm Sunday

We each have a mission, a role to play, whether we think we know what that is or not. We are also blessed with the gifts and talents to succeed in that mission. Let us humbly commit ourselves to the loving service of God.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table... Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this." Luke 22:21. 23

An Illustration to set the scene

The story of the *Tortoise and the Hare* is one of Aesop's Fables.

In it, the proud hare boasts of his speed and is challenged to a race by the humble tortoise, who declares that he will beat the hare.

So a course is fixed and the race starts.

The hare darts almost out of sight at once. but soon stops and, to show his contempt for the tortoise, lies down to have a rest.

The tortoise plods on and on, and when the hare wakes from his nap, he sees the tortoise just near the winning post and cannot run up in time to save the race.

In some translations of the fable the hare decides to have some breakfast before even starting the race.

When he eventually makes his way to the finish line, he finds that the tortoise has already got there.

The tortoise embodies the bravery, perseverance and humility that we can all find inside ourselves.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

“Slow and steady wins the race” is a precept also found in today’s first reading from Isaiah, in which we read of the servant’s humiliation and vindication.

This can be linked to Christ’s humiliation and vindication: the Son of God is disrespected, tortured and executed, but is then resurrected and glorified by God.

This was Jesus’ mission; what he was born to do.

Later, on the same night we read about in today’s Gospel, Jesus prays, ***“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done”*** (Luke 22:42).

Christ humbled himself to the extent of accepting death.

But what of the disciples in today’s Gospel reading?

Their behaviour is hardly an illustration of loyalty and humility.

We are told that their response to Jesus’ revelation that one of them will betray him is to begin asking among themselves which of them it could be who will do this.

We can imagine them sitting together, saying, ***“It won’t be me. Could it be him?”***

Rather than focusing and reflecting on what Jesus has just said to them and its significance for their own lives, they display the characteristics of the boastful hare – so confident in their own virtue that the possibility of failing Jesus seems impossible.

In another choice of Gospel reading for today the disciples dispute who among them is the greatest (Luke 22:24).

Where is their humility?

Not one of them showers himself in glory on the night in question.

Judas betrays Jesus, and before breakfast Peter will have denied that he knows Jesus – not once, but three times. Everyone but John seems to disappear during the course of the night and the following day.

Only John is present at the crucifixion.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

We all have within us the ability to let our friends and loved ones down, putting ourselves before everyone else.

Yet whether we are characteristically like the tortoise or the hare, each of us is blessed with the humility to put the needs of others before ourselves.

The tortoise is slow and steady, using the gifts he has been given to win the race against the odds.

He is like the faithful servant who, in sticking to what they believe, is vindicated in ultimate victory.

The fable of the ***Tortoise and the Hare*** is an old one, though there is no Latin version in evidence; it appears in Greek.

One commentary on Aesop's Fables cites an anonymous Greek source: "***Many people have good natural abilities which are ruined by idleness; on the other hand, sobriety, zeal and perseverance can prevail over indolence.***"

The tale of the Tortoise and the Hare holds out hope to those disciples among us who are just as hopeless as the original twelve.

Whether we are more like the tortoise or the hare, we are all gifted with skills and talents which will help us to win through, if we commit ourselves humbly to the service of God.

“But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table... Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.” *Luke 22:21, 23*

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 some folk are not able to meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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