Sunday 27 May – Trinity Sunday

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40; Psalm 32(33); Romans 8: 14-17; Matthew 28: 16-20

*Jesus said,*

*‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’*

Jesus spoke these words long before theologians had begun to work out the doctrine of the Trinity – a work that is, actually, ongoing. He is giving us a great responsibility – and dignity: human beings doing something in the name of the Father who created all things – in the name of the Son, who came into the world to offer us a model for living and opened the way to eternal life – and in the name of the Holy Spirit who inspires all people towards goodness and truth. A mighty privilege and one we honour every time we make the Sign of the Cross.

* When you make the Sign of the Cross, how aware are you of the dignity of what you are doing?
* What does it mean for you to live your life in the name of the Holy Trinity?

Spend some time today reflecting on the Sign of the Cross. How might doing something in the name of the Father make a difference in how you do it? And what of in the name of the Son, Jesus Christ? And of the Holy Spirit? If you do not already do it, think about opening your day with the Sign of the Cross – putting all you do that day into the name of the Trinity… and then closing it with another, in gratitude for all the day has brought.

*KT*

Monday 28 May – (Monday of Eighth Week in Ordinary Time)

Scripture: 1 Peter 1: 3-9; Psalm 110 (111); Mark 10:17-27

*The rich young man said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’*

Mark includes an important detail in his description of the scene – that Jesus looked at the rich young man and loved him. He is not trying to catch him out or overburden him. He looks at someone who is earnestly trying to live a good life and who wants to do even more. He sees the good in the young man – but also the better – and even the best… and what is stopping that coming to fruition.

* Why is it important to remember that Jesus is looking at the young man with love not a desire to criticise?
* What is the difference between being good – and being your better – and your best?

Ponder today the good things you could lay before Jesus. Feel his love and approval of that – but then open your mind and heart to what might be suggested as your “better” or even your “best”. What might you need to do – or possibly let go of – so that this better and best can emerge and grow.

*KT*

Tuesday 29 May

Scripture: 1 Peter 1: 10-16; Psalm 97(98); Mark 10:28-31

*Peter began to say to him, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you.’*

Peter and the other disciples enjoyed the kudos of being seen as important followers of Jesus. They did give up a lot to be his followers – at least for a time but Peter shows that it was not altogether altruistic. There is a hint that he and the others are expecting something in return for their discipleship. This is understandable – but discipleship should not really come with strings attached. It is completely natural that we should want some kind of proof of Jesus’ approval and ‘rewards’ can help to keep us motivated. But, for mature disciples, it is usually more a case of making the decision and living it out regardless.

* What is the difference between a faith that needs rewards and motivational input – and a faith that just gets on with it?
* Where would you say you come on the spectrum of needing lots of “stroking” or accepting there may not be much in this life?

Spend time today pondering how much you need in terms of praise and encouragement in your faith? And, perhaps, how good you are at giving it to those who need it. Ask the Lord for the grace to trust that, if you are doing what you sense to be his will, the rewards will far outweigh the sacrifices.

*KT*

Wednesday 30 May

Scripture: 1 Peter 1: 18-25; Psalm 147; Mark 10: 32-45

*James and John said to Jesus, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you are asking.’*

A popular phrase these days is “Be careful what you wish for”. The same thing could be applied to prayer – “be careful what you pray for”. It is understandable – and right – that we bring our needs to the Lord in prayer but it is not always wise to tell God precisely what we want – how we want it – and when we want it. We may not always see the full picture and it is all too possible that, if God granted us our specific request, it could end up very different from what we thought we were asking for.

* When have you prayed for something – got the answer you thought you wanted – only to find it was not really the right answer?
* How would you explain God not always granting people’s prayers?

Spend time today thinking about things you would like to pray for. Work out how to phrase it so that you leave it open for God to respond in the way that is actually best for you – even if that is not obvious at the time.

*KT*

Thursday 31 May The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Scriptures: Zephaniah: 14-18 or Romans 12: 9-16; Isaiah 12; Luke 1: 39-45

*Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.’*

Today’s feast recalls a simple but profound encounter between two women drawn together by the power of the Holy Spirit. At one level, it is two pregnant women sharing a moment of shared pleasure in the expectation of two children. At another, it is a meeting of minds, hearts and souls as the Holy Spirit infuses both women with a powerful appreciation of what the Holy Spirit is doing in their lives. Both women then went on to give birth and do all the chores associated with tiny babies – toddlers – children – and family life in general. They did not stay on the heights of spiritual ecstasy but took what they learned into their everyday lives.

* When have you had an encounter with someone that felt truly Spirit-filled?
* How do we take the fruits of a moment of intense joy into the routine of daily life?

Spend some time today as an eye-witness to this meeting of two women – of different ages and different stages of pregnancy but united by joy at the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Pray for the grace to be open to similar encounters in your own life – sharing the joy of others in what God does for them – and sharing your own joy with them.

*KT*

Friday 1 June – St Justin

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:7-13; Psalm 95(96); Mark 11: 11-26

*Jesus said, ‘I tell you, if you say to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea”, and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.’*

The last 2000 years have not seen many mountains launched into the sea –so we might wonder what Jesus is getting at in this passage. Is it really the case that people’s prayers have been so ineffective? Of course, we could reasonably ask why anyone would want to throw a mountain into the sea. But the fact is that many prayers seem to go unanswered – even though Jesus seems to insist that if our faith is big enough they will be. This is a challenge – is it our lack of faith that stops someone being cured – or wars being brought to an end? Or is something else happening?

* Do you think Jesus really meant disciples to throw mountains into the sea to prove the size of their faith?
* Does God answering our prayer depend solely on the size of our faith?

Ponder Jesus’ words and what the meaning underlying might be. Is there an issue challenging your faith just now? Bring it into prayer with a request that you receive just enough strength and faith to accept whatever way God chooses to respond to it.

*KT*

Saturday 2 June (Ss Marcellinus and Peter)

Scriptures: Jude 1: 17, 20-25; Psalm 62(63); Mark 11:27-33

*As Jesus was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?’*

Most of us have heard – and possibly even said – “who does he or she think they are?” This would usually be about someone who seems to be acting above their station – or seeming to act as if they are more important than they actually are. Sometimes our comments are based on an element of jealousy and this may be what lay behind the comments from the priests, scribes and elders. They would have spent years in study, prayer and discussion to get to the position they are in – and here is this wandering preacher turning up from Galilee and attracting followers wherever he goes.

* Why did the priests, scribes and elders struggle so much to understand Jesus?
* What did Jesus’ authority look like?

Pray today for those who are in positions of authority – especially where it is unjustly challenged or a source of jealousy among others.

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