

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Thus says the Lord: ‘You say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.’

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

Remember your compassion, O LORD.

O LORD, make me know your ways.

Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth, and teach me;
for you are the God of my salvation.

Remember your compassion, O LORD.

Remember your compassion, O LORD,
and your merciful love, for they are from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth,
nor my transgressions.

In your merciful love remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD.

Remember your compassion, O LORD.

Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he shows the way to sinners.
He guides the humble in right judgement;
to the humble he teaches his way.

Remember your compassion, O LORD.

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE PHILLIPPIANS

Brothers and Sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy; complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION.

Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord,
and I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO MATTHEW

The tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God
before you.'

At that time: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." And he answered, "I will not", but afterwards he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, "I go, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.

For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

It is really joyful when someone has changed their mind to do something better instead. All too often you wonder “Are they listening at all.” I began to wonder, going shopping or walking in summer “no” said to a small child is understood but interpreted as “Shout louder”. It doesn’t work! I admire the strength of character of parents to keep the boundaries of no means no. Although by the age of 16 you work out flattery and praise usually gets her to change her mind. Its good practice, as early as the 4th century a wise writer, John the Golden mouthed wrote - if you want to criticize, praise someone first of all. The 20th century Jesuit writer wrote that no one complains of their right to judge, but if they get it wrong it is because they were ill informed and it is someone else fault.

Jesus’ parable is addressed to scribes and pharisees who prided themselves on their knowledge of Moses’ law to say yes to God but did not practise the basic commandment to love your neighbour. A fundamental change of heart was needed but like many they preferred to stay in the comfortable lives they have, being given respect everywhere. Christianity is disturbing and many do not like the challenges offered to them by believers.

After Lots of prophets failed to convince it seems appropriate that God sent his only Son to speak with authority. His message we receive as a constant reminder of the promise we receive in the new Covenant

To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often. To change begins by listening, the hardest, reflecting and then being brave enough to carry out what you have decided.