



Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 11th August 2019

In England and Wales – Prayer for the people of Europe

Keynote: Jesus reassures the disciples – faithful service will be rewarded

Book of Wisdom 18: 6-9

'That night had been foretold to our ancestors,' says the writer of this book of Wisdom. The 'night' in question, is the dark night of the Passover, when the People of Israel escaped from Pharaoh and the Egyptian's slavery. The contrast is between the darkness – the confusion of that night for the Egyptians – and the confidence of God's People who walk in the light led by the pillar of fire to freedom. What can we expect as the new People of God? Like Israel, *'when they saw what kind of oaths they had put their trust in, they joyfully took courage. This was the expectation of the people, the saving of the virtuous and the ruin of their enemies.'* The covenant then between God and the chosen disciples means that *'the saints would share the same blessings and dangers alike.'* If we are faithful to God's Promise then we too can expect God's blessing – we too can walk in liberty to be free. Joyfully we can take courage and walk on!

Responsorial Psalm 32 (33) – a loyal song of praise to God

Letter to the Hebrews 11: 1-2, 8-19

'Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for,' says the author of this letter. Abraham's example of faith becomes the benchmark for the true disciple. Its chief characteristic is illustrated by Abraham's total obedience to God's word, *'It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going.'* Our own call to faith is just like that. We are invited to set out on a journey, we know not quite how, or where God will lead us. Abraham too, had his faith tested, *'It was by faith that Abraham, when put to the test, offered up his only son Isaac... he was confident that God had the power even to raise the dead.'* So one of the essential aspects of faith, like Abraham's faith, is total trust and unreserved obedience to God and his word, *'Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for.'* What we long for in hope is the risen life of Christ.

Gospel according to Luke 12: 32-48

Today these sayings of Jesus illustrate the characteristics of true discipleship. *'Give alms'* may suggest sharing with those in need; but the disciple is being also asked to focus on the really important lasting values, *'Get yourselves purses that do not wear out... for where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.'* Now is the time for action tomorrow will not do, *'Be like someone waiting for the master to return... dressed for action... ready to open the door.'* Yes! Now it is time, *'You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'* The faithful wise disciple is also one who treats other people with fairness, with integrity. He is the trusted servant. One who is not two-faced, behaving in one way in the presence of the master and treating others differently. *'When someone has had a great deal given to them, a great deal will be demanded of them... when someone has had a great deal given them on trust, even more will be expected of them.'* As Jesus says, *'Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at his employment.'*