



Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 22nd July 2018

In England & Wales:

Cycle of Prayer – Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights

Keynote: God's word assures us of reconciliation, peace, security and welcome

Prophet Jeremiah 23: 1-6

'Doom for the shepherds who allow my pasture to be destroyed and scattered – it is the Lord who speaks!' The contrast is between the bad shepherds – the kings 'in charge of my people: "You have let my flock be scattered and have not taken care of them" – and the example of the true shepherd. 'I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the countries where I have dispersed them, and will bring them back to their pastures... I will raise up shepherds to look after them.' The dispersed, the scattered remnant will come back to their pastures, and God *'will raise up shepherds to look after them; no fear, no terror for them anymore; not one will be lost – it is the Lord who speaks!'*

Responsorial Psalm 22 (23): 1-4 – A confident song of trust in the beloved shepherd and friend

Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 2: 13-18

The phrase: *'He is the peace between us'* may be a fragment of an early Christian hymn. Christ is the one who brings reconciliation between Jew and Gentile. Indeed it is Christ who brings us all together as one in Christ. Christianity is about a radical welcome. This reality is what we celebrate whenever we come together in the faith community of the Eucharist. *'For Christ is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them (us) apart... in his own person he killed the hostility.'* There is a message here that is relevant for our world today. Our society, so infected with racial, cultural, and religious prejudice, a world of social discrimination, a global world dividing rich and poor, needs that healing. Since Christ *'is our peace'* then the Christian community has much work to do. This is the reality for it is our task *'to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand.'*

Gospel according to Mark 6: 30-34

The reading from Mark's gospel continues. Last week the disciples were sent out two and two to preach the Good News, now the disciples return, full of themselves, and excited at the outcome of their missionary endeavours. *"You must come away to some lonely place,"* Jesus tells them *"a lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while."* *So they set off in a boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the people saw them going, and many could guess where.'* Great numbers of people come from all directions, eager to hear the gospel. Jesus, ever the good shepherd, takes pity upon them and *'set himself to teach them at some length.'* Do we ourselves have this eagerness, running forward to listen to the gospel, and then have the enthusiasm, stamina and perseverance to share the good news with those who hunger after truth?

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