



Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 24th February 2019

In England and Wales –

Cycle of Prayer: For the Victims of Human Trafficking and Slavery

Keystone: Jesus teaches us to be merciful

First Book of Samuel 26: 2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

The young man David enjoys growing popularity with the people, but King Saul is jealous to the point of madness and plans to kill David, who warned by the king's son Jonathan, escapes to the wilderness. David unjustly accused, hunted by King Saul and his army into the wilderness, has his opportunity to take revenge and enter the camp at night undetected, to kill the king. Instead, David demonstrates his honour and loyalty and commands his men: *'Do not kill him (Saul), for who can lift his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt? David took the spear and the pitcher of water from beside Saul's head, and they made off.'* The story ends with David saying to Saul, *'The Lord God repays everyone for their uprightness and loyalty. Today the Lord put you in my power, but I would not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed.'* The gospel passage today will take up this idea of mercy and forgiveness for we must learn to love our enemies. All of us are in some ways 'the Lord's anointed'.

Responsorial Psalm 102 (103) – In praise of God's loving mercy

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 15: 45-49

Paul sees the figure of Adam – as the first human being – given breath and life in the image and likeness of God. *'The first man, Adam, as scripture says, became a living spirit; but the last Adam (Christ) has become a life-giving spirit.'* He contrasts that earthly Adam who brought death to all mankind, with Christ as the new Adam who through his death and resurrection brings new life to all the creation. *'The first man, being from earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven'*, says Paul. Within each of us the apostle recognises the earthly nature of that first sinful Adam, but now he sees our earthly nature as transformed by Christ, *'we who have been modelled on the earthly man, will now be modelled on the heavenly.'* Each of us then needs to recognise the goodness of God within ourselves and in others, and then allow this goodness to transform our lives, and the lives of those we encounter.

Gospel according to Luke 6: 27-38

When someone hits you, your first instinct is not to present the other cheek! Today the words of Jesus for his would-be disciple are radical and different. We might place self-protection first, but a different form of human conduct is expected of the Christian disciple. It is not about giving in or allowing the stronger bully to have their way. Instead it is about sharing and giving love even to ones' enemies. *'Love your enemies'* says Jesus, *'and do good, and lend without hope of return... do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves... Give and there will be gifts for you... the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back... If you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much'* says Jesus. *'Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without hope of return.'* That is the way of Jesus if we would be merciful and follow the new way of God.

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