

Greatness is in service

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19 October 2003, Pentecost 19

Job 38: 1-7 (34-41); Psalm 104: 1-10, 26; Hebrews 5: 1-10; Mark 10: (32-34) 35-45

This is transcribed from notes.

Thank God for the day and the people and the generosity which made the fete go so well again. Thanks to Leighton who at short notice made so much happen.

Every year I am grateful for our location, the courtyard and the facilities we have to hold our fete.

In spite of people saying that money wasn't coming in, we still reached the magical figure of \$4,000—although I'm not sure if there are costs to be taken from that.

Thank you one and all!

A church fete is never just a fund raising event. It is a community event drawing people together to celebrate and enjoy.

With so many other fetes on at the same time I wonder if we are able to draw people together the way fetes of the past used to do when the church fete was the one.

One element of our fete which I missed yesterday was the contribution of the kindergarten in both the activity they provided and the number of small children and families who attended.

Due to a lack of interest in fundraising, the Kindergarten has been charging an extra \$50 pa in lieu of fundraising activities. And so we didn't have children and families yesterday.

It seems we will need some fun and excitement factor, something which draws people and gives them a good experience as well as the stalls with things for sale.

I think the children's card workshop is a great idea and possibly could have a large tent of its own providing activities and child care while mums and dads wander around or have a cup of coffee.

Lets also look at spreading the load by mustering more help so that it is not the same people doing the setting up and the selling—that might sound like a forlorn hope.

Having heard for a couple of weeks about Job and his suffering and struggle to understand what is happening—we hear today God's answer to all his questioning.

Up to this point he has protested his innocence and his own goodness — but now he is confronted by his own weakness and human frailty in the face of God. You think you are so good Job

We don't hear it today, but Job does come to a point of realization and acceptance of his place before God. He becomes aware of God and of himself!

But his journey to this point has brought him through great suffering and questioning.

Today it is God who speaks and asks the questions, turning the tables on Job. (v. 1-4)

In the gospel however, Jesus is aware that to tread the path of God's calling is to invite suffering and struggle.

In the new Testament, Christ, the suffering servant is set before us as the model for Christian existence. Mark offered this as a way of countering the "heresy" which afflicted his church.

That “heresy” is the fascination/obsession with the divine man Christology which saw Jesus as a wonder worker and was dismayed at the prospect of persecution.

Mark tells the story with the disciples as symbols of the danger of the Church of his day.

— emphasis on the divine Christ coming to a ... great long drawn out..

— failure to understand the suffering Messiah

Jesus in our passage from Mark is on his journey to Jerusalem. (10.32)

Jesus walks ahead. The disciples, amazed, afraid because they were headed to Jerusalem, and it seems that in response to their amazement and fear Jesus begins to speak of the suffering of the Son of Man.

[country boys going to big city — Foreboding Jesus’ manner...]

The heading to Jerusalem may have indicated to James and John that Jesus was about to establish his kingdom and so they ask to be given positions of hour and power. But they have not grasped from what Jesus has said that his kingdom will be of a different nature and so their request is confused. Their request does show that they expect some ground breaking experience.

Their request nevertheless reveals a selfishness, a quest for power at a time when Jesus is wrestling with his call and the potential difficulties awaiting him in Jerusalem.

But the Lord deals more gently with them than the other ten would have liked. These disciples appear to be blinded by insensitivity to the internal difficulties Jesus faces. Two come with selfish demands while the other express anger.

James and John however were only following the time honoured tradition common among the powerful of their day that when someone comes to power he would reward his friends and those who helped him in his quest... (Note that in Luke it is their mother who makes the request.)

Jesus responds to the request by telling them they do not know what they are asking and we see the irony that when Jesus comes in to his kingdom and the throne of his cross that on his right and left were two crucified thieves ...

“Cup” and “Baptism” had been Old Testament symbols for suffering and for undergoing the wrath of God

later of course, baptism had the meaning of purification, but St Paul saw that baptism ... into the death of Christ (Rom 6:3)

Hebrews points to Christ the High Priest who follows the path of suffering.

Because Mark wanted us to know the Christ who is crucified and not just the Christ who is the wonder worker, he reports on the reversals and points to the reversals of the Christian calling that greatness is in service.

I have been heartened to hear the stories of people who acted without fear for their own safety in the Bali bombing—pointing out that their awards were really for those who helped them.