

Thought for the week
23rd Sunday of the Year (B)
9th September 2018

“*You shouldn’t judge a book by its cover*” is a well known and often repeated saying. For many people, it is really hard not to make judgements based on image and appearance and this can frequently reinforce prejudices.

The second reading from St James this weekend cautions us against favouring the well-dressed man above the poor man, turning ourselves into corrupt judges.

We are very caught up with social media today and it seems that for many they must chronicle their image and their look, whether they are at a top venue or simply going to the supermarket: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and YouTube have got it all covered.

This month has been hailed as ‘Scroll Free September’. The Royal Society for Public Health is leading the initiative to encourage young people, in particular, to limit their use of social media - or even abstain completely. The aim is to promote a healthy relationship with social media and thus help to address the negative issues of poor body image, anxiety and depression.

This seems to me very timely given the recent report of alarming numbers of young people self-harming. Part of the report indicated that some teenagers have low self-esteem, because they judge themselves against the so-called perfection of the lives of others and celebrity culture. This is one of the issues which may lead to self-harming.

In our prayers this week, let us remember those who may not feel worthy or validated by the views of others on social media. We acknowledge that all are worthy of God’s love.

Mary