

## Thought for the week

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent — 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Jeremiah has the reputation of being a bit of an Eeyore, full of doom and gloom, but this weekend's first reading is deeply consoling and full of hope. The prophet foresees that God will take the initiative and plant God's Law deep in our hearts, transforming us from the inside. Here is a new covenant that is deeply relational, in which we are intimately tied to God's goodness and mercy. Jeremiah writes like a Christian ahead of time, knowing that God not only forgives, but also forgets.

In the Psalm response David trusts that God will not only cleanse us, but will also change us, putting a pure heart and a steadfast spirit within us. Our part is to cooperate with the transforming work of God.

The Gospel reading marks the end of the first part of John's Gospel. Our passage begins with 'some Greeks' who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and asked Philip if they might *see* Jesus; Philip asks Andrew. It is not clear whether they were Greek-speaking Jews, proselytes to the Jewish religion, or Gentiles, but they were undoubtedly foreigners who had heard of Jesus and were eager to see him for themselves. There are echoes here of the opening of this Gospel, when Andrew and another person are invited by Jesus to '*come and see*' where he lives.

We don't know if the Greeks of today's reading concluded, as Andrew and his friend did earlier, that they had encountered the Messiah, but we can try in our imagination to stand with them, in the hustle and bustle of preparation for the festival in Jerusalem. What is it that draws them – us – to want to see him? If we stand in prayer alongside those Greeks, we may each find our own answer. Are we drawn by the promise of the first reading and the psalm, to unconditional forgiveness? Is it the desire for inner transformation, and for our prayer to be transformed into action? Do we want to listen to him, the loving servant, who invites us to be servants alongside him? Do we *really* want to walk with him to Jerusalem? There will be a cost for us – we shall have to die to self, in order to bear a harvest for the Lord.

We might pray that God's Law be writ large in our hearts, that we may be changed from within. Perhaps I shall ask for the pure heart and steadfast spirit promised in the Psalm, in order to discern where God is calling me to follow and serve him... this week... today.