

Thought for the Week
18th August, 2019
20th Sunday in Ordinary time

Well! A first reading of today's gospel left me floored: Division and fighting within the family seems to be against everything that Jesus preached! What happened to '*Love God and love my neighbour as myself*'? Clearly a bit more thought was needed!

Today's gospel continues the theme of the last few Sundays where Jesus reminds the crowds that it isn't possessions or our own needs that matter or bring happiness, but rather love of God and readiness to follow him and do his will. At this point Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and he is preparing his followers for his coming passion and death. '*There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over*'. We have not been asked to make that ultimate sacrifice, but our commitment to faith requires us to change our attitude to material things and take seriously our moral responsibilities.

Simeon, holding the baby Jesus in the temple, told Mary that the child was destined for the rise and fall of many and would be a sign that would be contradicted. Wherever the word of God is heard and acted upon division occurs and this includes in our relationships with friends and family members. Putting God first has never been easy as any quick look at the news or a delve into history will show.

At the beginning of today's gospel Jesus said: '*I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were blazing already!*' John the Baptist reminded the crowds that he was baptising with water, but someone mightier was coming who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire and it is this that Jesus is referring to.

Today Jesus is reminding us to be prepared for making difficult decisions and the conflict that may follow, but if we make those decisions in the knowledge that peace is the goal for all those who wish to enjoy God's kingdom, then we can be sure that conflict will ultimately give way to the fire of God's love for each one of us so that we can give our love to our friends and family.

A Parishioner