

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Week beginning Sunday 20th of February 2022 (Epiphany 7C)

Getting started Questions:

- What stood out for you in the sermon or other spiritual input you heard, read or saw this week?
- What has been some of the challenges of the week just gone?
- Where have you seen God at work this week?

1st Reading: Genesis 45.3-11, 45.15

³ Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty." ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Questions:

- We pick up Joseph's story towards the end of the saga. How familiar are you with the story of Joseph? How familiar do you think those within & outside the church are with this story?
- There is a surprise revelation at the beginning of this passage. How do you cope with surprises? How does the phrase "God of surprises" resonate with you?
- This is a story of a dysfunctional family that reconciles (to a point). How relevant do you think this could be in our time?

Psalm 37.1-11, 37.40-41

- ¹ Do not vie with the wicked:
or envy those that do wrong;
- ² For they will soon wither like the grass:
and fade away like the green leaf.
- ³ Trust in the Lord and do good:
and you shall dwell in the land
and feed in safe pastures.
- ⁴ Let the Lord be your delight:
and he will grant you your heart's desire.
- ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord:
trust him, and he will act.
- ⁶ He will make your righteousness
shine as clear as the light:

and your innocence as the noonday.

⁷ Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him:

do not be vexed when someone prospers,
when they put their evil purposes to work.

⁸ Let go of anger and abandon wrath:

let not envy move you to do evil.

⁹ For the wicked shall be cut down:

but those who wait for the Lord shall possess the land.

¹⁰ In a little while the ungodly shall be no more:

you will look for them in their place,
but they will not be found.

¹¹ But the meek shall possess the land:

and enjoy the abundance of peace.

⁴⁰ Deliverance for the righteous shall come from the Lord:

he is their strength in time of trouble.

⁴¹ The Lord will help them and deliver them:

he will save them from the ungodly and deliver them,
because they come to him for refuge.

Questions:

- Verses 4-6 sound amazing... but are they realistic? What do you think the Psalmist means by those verses?
- Verse 7 seems very appropriate for the times we live in. How hard is it to be patient waiting for God to act and/or the world to change?
- Which verse do you connect with the most? Which do you find most challenging?

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 15.35-50

³⁵ But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?'

³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. ⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Questions:

- Paul continues to talk about resurrection (following on from last week's passage). How have you experienced resurrection this week?
- Do you find this passage hopeful and encouraging or challenging and difficult?

- Paul makes clear is that God's plan for resurrection is nothing like our current world. How does that make you feel?

Gospel: Luke 6.27-38

27 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. **29** If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. **30** Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. **31** Do to others as you would have them do to you. **32** 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. **35** But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. **37** 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; **38** give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

Questions:

- What does loving your enemies mean in a practical sense? How far is too far and too hard?
- Have you had an experience of forgiveness has surprised you?
- Who do you find hardest to love? Who do you think might find it hardest to love you?

Prayer of the week

Almighty God, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law: grant that we may love you with our whole heart, and our neighbours as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.