

Daily update Dec 16th

Readings: Ps 85:7-13; Luke 7:18b-23

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are well. I expect at the moment you may still be searching the internet and catalogues for presents. (It is amazing that even though Christmas comes on the same date every year, how late I leave some of the shopping!) We are looking of course for the gift that would meet people's hopes and I have written about this recently with respect to be able to thank God.

However, in the gospel story today, John wants to see if Jesus is the messiah he was expecting. This of course cuts two ways and Jesus' answer makes interesting reading- verse 22. For the benefit of his disciples, John the Baptist wanted to know if Jesus was the promised one. How would he know?

John's expectations were based on several pictures, Mal 3:1 and 4:6, for example a great prophet. He also identified Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God, John 1:29-30, who would bring fire, the Holy Spirit and a winnowing stick, Luke 3:15-16..... There was a lot going on for John! But it was also true for the rest of God's people in Judah. Would the Messiah come to conquer and usurp the Romans and usher in God's rule again as David had against the Philistines. The people were used to individuals appearing offering great hope of liberation, (see Acts 32-39). Everyone was looking, but it had been a long time since anyone had appeared even close to being God's Messiah.

Life involves searching. Whether we want to find something or somebody it rarely just appears as we expect.

Jesus' response to the two disciples was to speak of his mission and what he was doing. It was not a simple 'yes' as such, because not everything John foresaw would come altogether. But he was fulfilling the prophecies in proclaiming Good News and bringing healing to the broken. He was authentic and everything he did pointed to the salvation God would offer.

If we were in John the baptist's cell, what would bring us encouragement? When I look for Jesus, what am I hoping to discover? How might I be healed, or comforted, or reminded of his saving work to me. Jesus responded to the people around him, with signs of the kingdom of God, a foretaste of the restoration we all await. If we are bold to ask, he will surely answer. To do so we need to remember to look forwards as well as back to God's faithfulness.

Lord help me see where you are present in my life and in the world around me, so that I can bring your light to my part of the world. Amen..