

Tuesday Reflection 23 February 2021

PRAYER

In today's Mass readings we have a wonderful prayer manual. In the first reading, from Isaiah (55:10-11) we have the lovely image of God's word going out and effecting growth before returning to Him in an everlasting cycle of fulness. In the Gospel, Jesus admonishes his followers to use words sparingly; we need to be mindful that if we are speaking, we are not listening, not listening to the voice of God within us - and what can we tell God that he does not know already - and, important though the prayer of petition is, who are we to be telling God what he should do?

So what is this word of God of which Isaiah speaks? It can be summed up in a single word - LOVE. But what is love? It can perhaps be summed up as 'wanting the good of the other' - whether it is the love of God for His creation, the love of a parent for their child, the lover's love for the beloved or the altruism which keeps human society going as we look out for the needs of others. The centrepiece of the Gospel is Jesus teaching his followers the Lord's Prayer.

It is important to remember that the Lord's Prayer is a communal prayer; it is about 'us', not 'me'. Some of the formulations do, however, leave a few questions open for us to answer, for example: 'Thy Kingdom come' - but how? 'Thy will be done' - but by whom? 'Give us this day our daily bread' - but who is the baker?

These questions bring us back to Isaiah 55. It is only by the word of God (Love) moving within us that these things will happen.

Somebody wrote that God is not a noun but a verb. If we are created in God's image, then perhaps the same applies to us; when we recognise the presence of God within us, then we can act in His name according to His will and so become co-actors rather than seeing ourselves as passive recipients.

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