

Reflection for Saturday 16th January

In this morning's Mass readings we are presented with Jesus who is very human and as such is very approachable because he understands what we are like. He is also interested in every aspect of our lives and can help us whenever we turn to him.

The first of our readings comes from the Letter to the Hebrews. It begins with a warning. It likens the word of God to a two-edged sword except that it is even sharper. It can penetrate to the very ground of our being. In other words the writer of this letter is saying that there is no aspect of our personality to the centre of which God's word cannot pierce. None of us can keep secrets to ourselves, for the word of God is active in discerning the feelings and intentions of the heart. The heart is the centre of human personality and God penetrates there. We have to give an account of ourselves to God.

But the writer of the letter to the Hebrews does not leave it at that. God knows that we fall short of his love and we need someone who can put things right for us; that is why he sent Jesus the great High Priest, the Son of God, who can forgive us our sins if we truly repent. Jesus is human who sympathises with our weaknesses and has been tempted as we are tempted, but without sin. This means that Jesus knows what we are like and we can approach him with any matter that troubles us however small and he can help us through. Our problem is that we do not pray to God and so we just try to get through life on our own. Jesus can help carry our burdens when they become too great for us on our own.

In our Gospel reading from St Mark we see Jesus consorting with tax collectors and sinners. These people were considered outcasts by Jewish society and were to be avoided. Here we find Jesus not only talking to them but sitting down and eating with them. This then prompted the scribes of the Pharisees to ask why was Jesus doing this? Jesus answers them. "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick." Jesus knew that these people he was with at the table were outsiders, they weren't keeping to the strict demands of their religion. In that way they were sick and that's why he was with them to let them know there was a better way of life than the one they were leading. They were still God's children and Jesus made it known that they were loved by God and he wanted them to be in God's kingdom where they would find love, peace, and not greed and extortion which was the way of the tax collector and sinner.

We are kingdom of God people; Jesus our Saviour and friend can help us through the grace of the sacraments and prayer to become more like him.