



CV 12

Thought for the Day - Easter VI

By
Didymus

Zech. Ch.8, vv1-13
Rev. ch.21.22-22.5
John ch.21, vv1-14



I have always loved trees. The differences in the canopies, the flowers, the leaves, the shapes, but most all, the sougning of the wind and the swaying movement of the branches. In this blissful weather, the glory of Cornwall is almost painful to see since it is so pronounced – the wild flowers and the spring leaf on the trees, especially one of my favourites, the elm, a beautiful tree lost almost entirely to disease. We still have a lot here. Which leads me to wonder at a God so loving that his Creation goes to ridiculous extremes to produce such as the wisteria, or the beauty of the humble hawthorn, swaggering in extravagant beauty. One prays for it to last forever.

Oh well, back to thought for the day. It's Rogation Sunday, when we used to pray for the crops to be harvested in due course. Despite our industrialisation and post-industry society, the principle is still very important.

Looking at the Evensong readings, I find that, as last week, Zechariah is still banging on about rebuilding the Temple and the glory of Jerusalem, and Revelations is in similar vein. The biblical focus on the reality of Jerusalem is something that I find hard to accept, given that the old place is still the cockpit of hatred and religious intolerance, governed by a modern Herod and crowned with an American embassy bestowed by a modern Pilate. If, more likely, Jerusalem is an entirely spiritual concept created by God's love in which all is good, then Revelations reads much better.

On Thursday, whilst bursting out from social confinement, we remembered St. Matthias. He was the one selected by the meeting of believers to replace Judas Iscariot. He had been with the Disciples since first meeting Jesus. Little is known of him, but the important point in Acts, Ch.1 is that the group of disciples numbered not 12 but 120 and surely included women in their number. The figure 12 is referred to many times, being also the number of Jacob's children and which led to the 12 tribes of the Hebrews. I am inclined to think that there were more, certainly including women such as the Marys, Martha and the unnamed women supporters.

The Gospel is from John's final chapter. Ch.21 is a sort of codicil, since the Gospel clearly ended with Ch.20. Biblical research has concluded that the hand that wrote ch.21 was the same as that which wrote the rest of the Gospel. Not all of us when writing start at the beginning and achieve a seamless essay by the end: some, like me, start in the middle with an idea and struggle to the edges as new ideas and memories come to us. Surely this is not new, and John's author (since John would need to have survived to a great age to be the author) must be allowed the same latitude. Ch.21 is

important because it contains the lakeside meeting between most of the closer Disciples and Jesus, and, excluded this week for some reason, the restoration of Peter, the denier.

The lakeside meeting again teases our hunger to know how things happened, despite the fact that we won't. Jesus, now beyond death, eats a cooked meal again, the fish coming from a miraculous catch. Where have we heard that before? The restoration of Peter (and Peters do often need God's restoration!) is important, because it precedes the Ascension, which we will remember next Thursday. The Ascension was the moment when we all received the Great Commission from Jesus, clearly stated in Matthew's last verses. These words, together with Jesus' reiteration of the two Great Commandments, stand as the foundation of the Christian faith, linking faith with teaching:-

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Prayers

For those infected with coronavirus, or any other serious disease or problem.

For those who treat and heal, for their safety and strength.

For those who have lost a loved one as always, but especially due to CV19.

In thanks for the skills and determination of the healers, wherever and however working

In thanks for those who make the means of healing in drugs, equipment and clothing, and those who transport it.

In thanks for those in our communities who work to help others with food and services, for those who provide and deliver our food.

In thanks for the warmth of friendship.

We pray for those who we know of who are suffering, Lucy, Michael, and those many others known to us privately.

In all this we also pray for those nations elsewhere, riven by violence, intolerance, corruption, injustice, poverty and thirst, suffering poor health, and we pray for those who seek to bring a better life to unfortunate people.

And finally, in thanks for all we are given, especially those we love.

AMEN.