

Homily Easter 5 14/5/17

There are so many things one can say about today's gospel, so many different layers and ideas, that I was struggling to find a theme that really stuck out – and then it hit me – ‘Trust in God still, and trust in Me.’ That's a tall order isn't it? What is trust? We all have trust to varying degrees in different people. We know the phrase, ‘trust has to be earned,’ or ‘trust can be betrayed.’ Do you trust your husband or wife totally? Sometimes our husbands or wives can let us down – they don't live up to what we expect. And children, do you trust your parents? When we are young we think of our parents as gods, but as we grow older we begin to see that they are fallible too. So trust can be a very difficult thing. I remember a priest in the sixth form saying to me that if you had just one good friend in your lifetime, someone you could be really open with, someone you could really trust, then you would be truly blest. To go through life not able to trust anyone or anything would be very damaging. What devastation would be caused to the building of relationships and community.

Fr Mark used to say that God annoyed him at times because He is always right. I know that to be true for myself, and that's where you can find this centre in yourself to trust in God. Jesus said there are many rooms in his Father's house. There are many rooms in us too, many faces depending on whom we are speaking to, and we have a very private room, our own personal space that is the essence of us. I would say expand that room, invite Jesus into that space and say I'm going to trust in God still and trust in Jesus. I'll make room for Him and talk to Him as I would to the most dear, trusted and wonderful friend I could imagine. Once we let Jesus into that special room we open ourselves up to our vulnerability before Him, we open up to Him our weaknesses as well as our strengths. And it's meeting God in that room, that we find the sort of trust that Jesus is demanding of us.

Sometimes, like Philip we can say, ‘If only God would give me a sign.’ But God has given us a sign – His Son! Jesus says, ‘If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.’ Jesus is the mirror, the reflection of God Himself, so the Living Lord is the focus of our trust – the way to get to the Father. I was reading recently of the difference between betrayal of trust, and hurdles. Sometimes we have problems and can say, where is God in this? But we confuse the condition we’re in with betrayal. We’re human, and ultimately the hurdle will pass. So many times I think, we mistake a hurdle as a betrayal from God – we ask for something and it becomes a burden, a hurdle to get over. Yet it’s in those burdens, those hurdles - in the struggle and the storm, that we need to place our trust, that God will get us to the still calm centre of the storm, and as you know, the centre of a whirlwind is still. There’s a lovely verse in one of the psalms that says, ‘I answered you, concealed in the storm cloud.’

When we’re in a storm cloud of despair and hopelessness, it feels awful, BUT it’s then a case of putting our trust firmly in the Lord, and saying with great faith, as Julian of Norwich did –

‘ALL WILL BE WELL, AND ALL MANNER OF THINGS WILL BE WELL IN THE END – BOTH NOW, AND IN THE WORLD TO COME. AMEN.’