

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

I am feeling for the people of Leicester right now as they have just been told that they will be subject to a localised lockdown and will not be able to join everyone else when further pandemic restrictions are lifted on July 4th. Without being overly political I do question the advisability of re-opening pubs and restaurants on a Saturday, and especially Independence Day, after three months of closure. Already hospitals are being geared up for a huge influx of casualties that night. So there are lots of burdens around as a result of the pandemic. The people of Leicester feel burdened because they are being deprived, medical staff expect to be burdened because of the effects of irresponsible drinking, which itself becomes a burden to those who over indulge. There are burdens placed on us by other people and there are burdens we bring upon ourselves, so how do we respond?

Jesus gives us a very clear invitation in today's gospel – Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Is this pie in the sky or is it for real? Well let's go to the psalm written centuries before the ministry of Jesus but absolutely applicable to him by replacing the word Jesus for the word Lord. *Jesus is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love. How good is Jesus to all, compassionate to all creatures. And again, Jesus is faithful in all his words and loving in all his deeds. Jesus supports all who fall and raises all who are bowed down.* Throughout the whole of his ministry Jesus would have prayed these words, but Jesus also lived these words reminding us that for him there was a very clear connection between his prayer and his life, an example to us all. For us to pray the psalm is an invitation to action, to be kind and compassionate and abounding in love especially to those who are in most need. To be faithful in what we say, to be loving in what we do, to support and raise up those who are bowed down. There is an agenda there when we look around our own families and friends, where there may be illness, unemployment, breakdown of relationships, when we walk through the streets of our own towns and cities, seeing the Big Issue sellers or those asking for spare change, when we turn on the news and hear that there are more than 79 million refugees, twice the number of just 10 years ago. If we ask why such an increase it takes us into the world of the abuse of power, of violence, of the deprivation of human rights and freedom of speech. We look at Hong Kong right now and ask what is the UK Government doing about China breaking the agreement made on July 1st 33 years ago,

In Jesus' time it was those who were clever and learned in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Law who failed or refused to recognise who he was. They were the ones who thought that could silence him by having him put to death. But the 'mere children' refused to let that happen. They told stories about Jesus, then they wrote about him to make sure that he would never be forgotten because generation after generation right down to our own, would not only listen to what he said and did, but tried to do the same themselves, sharing his yoke and lifting the burdens of others.

Bidding Prayers for the 14th Sunday of the Year

Celebrant:

God is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love. With these words of the psalm in our minds and hearts we turn to God in prayer.

Reader:

For the Church – that the Church will always proclaim the Gospel as Good News giving life and love to all who receive it as God's word to us.

Lord in your mercy

For the people of Hong Kong and those others who live under repressive regimes – that human rights and freedom of speech will be restored.

Lord in your mercy

On the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service this Sunday we thank God for all those working within the NHS and pray that they will be generously rewarded for all that they do.

Lord in your mercy

As Public Worship is once again allowed in our churches, we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we determine when it will be safe and proper to resume the celebration of Mass with a congregation present.

Lord in your mercy

For those who have died, all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the Covid-19 pandemic, and Paddy McDermott, Winifred O'Gara, May Huston and Peggy Woodcock whose anniversaries occur this week – that they and all who have died may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intentions...pause...then

Lord in your mercy

We ask the prayers of Mary as we say, Hail Mary...

Celebrant:

All loving God, Jesus your Son invites us to come to him when we labour and are overburdened and to find rest for our souls. We ask you to listen to our heartfelt prayers and ask you to grant them all through your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen