

or whether it was in “Cakes and Ale” that I learned of Somerset Maugham’s youthful disillusionment with all things Christian when his prayer to God that his club foot would be cured on his birthday was not answered. Mark 11, 20-27, was Maugham’s stumbling block for this where he read of Jesus’ promise that prayer could move mountains. Maugham’s prayer didn’t move his. So what are we to make of this passage? It’s not difficult to see how a child would think he had been sold a pup. For, according to Mark, Jesus was emphatic enough in his promise and said it twice; after promising that through prayer a mountain could be cast into the sea he says “whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive it and you will.” There is no doubt that there is a problem with these sayings. I think it is fair enough to argue that the mountain passage is dramatic licence to emphasise the power of prayer, that we should take it seriously and never neglect it. It is the second injunction that presents a greater dilemma for a believer. So what is the answer? Perhaps there isn’t one. On the other hand perhaps, there is...

To be continued in our next...

Martyn Dyer

Entrance antiphon: Blest be God the Father, and the Only Begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit, for he has shown us his merciful love.

First Reading: Proverbs 8:22-31

Psalm 8: Response: How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-5

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is, who was, and who is to come. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 16: 12-15

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.



*The Hospitality of Abraham
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The Most Holy Trinity Cycle C, 2022

Weekly Reflection: The Lilies of the Field (3) We often think of prayer as something we say at specific times: in the morning, in the evening, at Mass and on occasional visits to the Blessed Sacrament in Church perhaps. But what

about all the other hours and minutes of the day. These may not be occupied by formalised prayer but to recollect awareness of God’s presence could and should fill these hours. That at any rate is how I interpret the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the separation of the sheep and the goats, the need to be vigilant at all times. Thus, to quote the words of Jesus: “watch therefore for you know neither the date nor the hour. Truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it to me.”

The story of the sower who went out to sow seeds culminates with those which fell upon good ground, and they are likened to those who hear the Word of God and keep it – they are the ones who will bear fruit up to a hundred-fold. This theme is developed more forcefully when Jesus addressing the multitude [Mark 8-34] says “if any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” and then leads to the question “what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” – one of many clear warnings of the futility of pursuing material gain for its own sake. Mark 10: 5-22 is so packed with advice that it might almost be regarded as a compendium of everything Jesus taught from the start to the end of his ministry: there is teaching on marriage, fidelity, innocence, honesty and compassion – all given in answers to questions from Pharisees, disciples or an enquiring stranger: what God has joined together let no man put asunder; let the children come to me; do not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or defraud and honour your father and mother, and finally, be prepared to give up everything in my name.

I cannot remember whether it was in Claire Tomalin’s excellent biography