

is the recurrent theme of human despair. He develops his theme in this way: whether we find it difficult to have faith in our fellow man or in ourselves, the knowledge that God has faith in us is both transformative and redemptive. In Psalm 27, David said *“Even were my father or mother to forsake me, the Lord will still receive me”*. Therefore, we may lose heart, but God never will. We may despair but God will give us hope. God believes in us, even if we do not believe in ourselves. We may sin and disappoint and come short again and again, but God never ceases to forgive us when we fail, and lift us when we fall.

Dr Sacks' conclusion is: *“God believes in us even if we don't always believe in ourselves. Remember this, and you will find the path from darkness to light”*. This is a conclusion we can appreciate while bearing in mind our central belief as Christians that by His suffering and death, the resurrected Christ has redeemed us once and for all and that Jesus said: *“I am the way, the truth and the life”*.

- (1) Judaism's Life-Changing Ideas: A weekly reading of the Jewish Bible;
(2) The central text of Jewish religious law and theology **-Stephen S**

Entrance antiphon: O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay.

First Reading: Exodus 16: 2-24, 12-15

Responsorial Psalm: 77 The Lord gave them bread from heaven /R

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord; no one can come to the Father except through me. Alleluia!

Gospel: John: 6: 24-35

Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven, endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste.



Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection: Some thoughts of Dr Jonathan Sacks (1): God believes in us:

In 2020 the late Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, published a book (1) of weekly essays on the Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible). In this series of articles I will summarise some of his ideas since I believe them to be illuminating for Christians as well as Jewish people. Dr Sacks starts with the creation. He

notes that repeatedly in Genesis we read: *“And God said, Let there be....and there was.....and God saw that it was good.”* Then the tone changes to: *“Let us make man in our own image...”* These matters arise: (i) only in creating man does God appear to reflect on making man before He creates him and (ii) who are ‘us’ since at the time there was only God? The Talmud’s (2) answer is that God consulted with the angels before creating man and that He did so because He was then making the one creature capable of understanding that he had been created and that God exists, but who was also capable of destroying life on earth. He gave us free will, rather than creating obedient robots. [cf The Catechism of the Catholic Church which states: “Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts”]. Thus the creation of man can only be explained by the fact that God had faith in man. As Sacks says: *“This is the extraordinary idea...God invests His hopes for the universe in this strange, cantankerous, ungrateful and sometimes degenerate creature called Homo Sapiens, part dust of the earth, part breath of God, whose behaviour disappoints and sometimes appals Him. Yet He never gives up”*.

When the author first visited Auschwitz, the question which haunted him was not: “Where was God?” He knew that God was in the command “Thou shalt not kill”. Just as God did not stop Adam committing original sin by eating forbidden fruit and did not stop Cain committing fratricide, so the gift of free will enables man to sin, however heinously. The question that haunted Dr Sacks as a result of the Holocaust is: *“Where is man?”* He says that throughout the Old Testament, perhaps most particularly in the Psalms,