

13th March 2022
Luke 12; 31-35

LENT II

Under the wings

Living Mystery, whose way is not ours, whose name cannot be bought or sold, lead us from justice without compassion, and sacrifice without mercy, to a love which nurtures and a grace without price, through Jesus Christ, the true Bread. Amen

Prayers for an inclusive church



The thought for the week in today's Weekly News reminds us that *"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* - Coretta Scott King.

I believe this sums up the meaning of the reading today, even more so when we remember this is the second Sunday in Lent, and the theme of the readings is that of confidence in God...in words of Psalm 27: "Wait for the Lord..." this is not, sit back and wait for things to happen, it is an active confidence – God **is** doing, God **is** interested, God **is** involved.

And what better image to this than the illustration in the Weekly News (and which you can see above). But let us follow the steps to get to this moment.

The first step: against all expectations, some Pharisees warn Jesus against the destructive intentions of Herod. This verse alone defies our preconceptions, not all Pharisees want to get rid of Jesus, there are some who seem to recognize in him something different, something worth protecting. This then is our first challenge – lets be careful to believe we know everybody's reactions, let us be open to surprise.

The second step: Jesus listens and hears what the Pharisees say and has a response -not to them but to Herod- you may want to get rid of me, but I have a mission, one which, despite you, I will publicly keep on doing. This is our second challenge – we will come up against opposition, we must be aware of this and be clear on what we will do.

The third step: Jesus affirms his confidence in God, and we discover this in his final words of this passage, which come from Psalm 118, which we will hear again with Jesus' entry to Jerusalem in Luke 19. In that Psalm we discover the source of Jesus' confidence: ***With the LORD on my side, I do not fear*** (Ps 118; 6) and here we find our third challenge: the source of our confidence and trust even when all seems to have collapsed.

And finally, the fourth step: Jesus' wonderful and hope-filled call: *how often have I desired to gather the children together, as a hen gathers her brood*. And the experience Jesus has encountered: **you were not willing**. Jesus knows that not everybody wants to say yes. Chickens do not go round gathering their chicks under the wings for protection, the chicks must come to the place they know is there, waiting for them. The challenge then is to live our active confidence and turn to that safe place, because there will be space for us, but we must go.

The whole situation is summed up in the image for today: all those little feet protected under the mother's wings, they know they can run there and there will be a place for them, and in the light of that turn again to the thought for the week - *The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members*.

Following Jesus' words, we should be that place of compassion for the community, but we cannot force people to turn to it, but they do have to hear about it, know about it, trust it is openness and welcoming. This is what we are facing as our journey of Life continues, and in this sense the conversation on Tuesday of the Lent Studies, was a great contribution to this process. Thanks be to God.