

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTERTIME

10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020



### Saint Damien of Molokai (1840 - 1889)

Joseph de Veuster was born in Belgium and took the name Damien on entering the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Leuven (Louvain).

He landed in Hawaii in 1864, fulfilling his dream of becoming a missionary.

In 1873, at his own request, he took up residence at the leper colony at Kalaupapa and ministered to its spiritual and material needs until he caught leprosy himself and eventually died of it.

**Reflection:** At the very formation of the Community that followed the teachings of Jesus we see that charity & almsgiving was at the centre. As the group increased more skills were found within the followers & they could get organised. The preachers went around the synagogues & market places telling people about what Jesus said & did. The new deacons, chosen amongst the believers & commissioned with the laying on of hands, helped distribute what they had to the poor & hungry.

In our time we do this by appeals, second collections in church, supporting food banks & what we do privately to help others.

### A Reading From the Acts of the Apostles 6: 1-15

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked.

So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, **'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.'**

The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected **Stephen**, a man full of faith and of the **Holy Spirit**, together with **Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch**, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

**Stephen** was filled with grace and power and began to work miracles and great signs among the people. But then certain people came forward to debate with **Stephen**, some from Cyrene and Alexandria who were members of the synagogue called the **Synagogue of Freedmen**, and others from Cilicia and Asia.

They found they could not get the better of him because of his wisdom, and because it was the **Spirit** that prompted what he said. So they procured some men to say, '**We heard him using blasphemous language against Moses and against God.**' Having in this way turned the people against him as well as the elders and scribes, they took **Stephen** by surprise, and arrested him and brought him before the **Sanhedrin**.

There they put up false witnesses to say, '**This man is always making speeches against this Holy Place and the Law. We have heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene is going to destroy this Place and alter the traditions that Moses handed down to us.**'

The members of the **Sanhedrin** all looked intently at **Stephen**, and his face appeared to them like the face of an angel.

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

**PSALM 32 (33)**

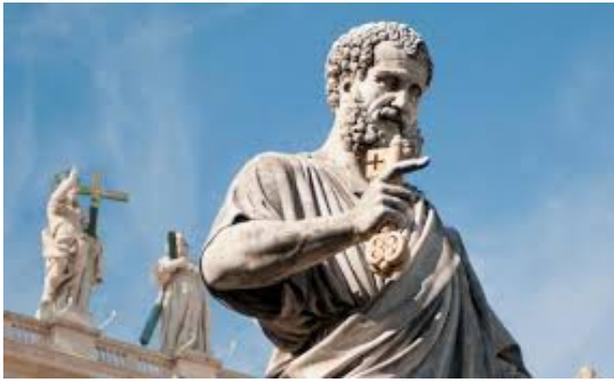
**(A heron by the canal in Dewsbury)**



**Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;  
For praise is fitting for loyal hearts.  
Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp,  
With a ten-stringed lute sing him songs.**

**For the word of the Lord is faithful  
And all his works to be trusted.  
The Lord loves justice and right  
And fills the earth with his love.**

**The Lord looks on those who revere him,  
On those who hope in his love,  
To rescue their souls from death,  
To keep them alive in famine.**



**Reflection** This letter of Saint Peter was to be circulated to new Christians over a wide area. He is reaching out to people in different regions & cultures & uniting them in a common faith founded on a living stone.

This image of building something new, beautiful &

enduring is a strong one. In this time when we cannot meet in our churches, we have to be the living embodiment of the Jesus. Peter advises us how to conduct ourselves so that the message – the Good News – will be spread far & wide & not wither like the grasses in the fields. He writes to people who may never have been mainstream, who did not consider that they had anything to be proud of. Peter says that they can be proud of their faith & their identity of Jesus, set apart to sing the praises of God.

### **A Reading From the First Letter of Saint Peter 1: 22 – 2:10**

You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like brothers, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the heart – your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God.

All flesh is grass and its glory like the wild flowers. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. What is this word? It is the Good News that has been brought to you.

Be sure, then, you are never spiteful, or deceitful, or hypocritical, or envious and critical of each other. You are new born, and, like babies, you should be hungry for nothing but milk – the spiritual honesty, which will help you to grow up to salvation – now that you have tasted the goodness of the Lord.

He is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men

down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people at all and now you are the People of God; once you were outside the mercy and now you have been given mercy.

## **THE WORD OF THE LORD**

**Reflection on the Gospel:** We have looked at this Gospel in two parts over the last few days. The first section is often associated with funerals & it is followed by this conversation between Jesus & the apostles Thomas & Philip. In identifying himself with the Father, he is fulfilling all that is the history of the Chosen People from the time of Moses when they left Egypt. Through his death & resurrection Jesus unites human experience to the divine & throws wide open the gates of Paradise.

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**Jesus said:**  
**'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.**  
**No one can come to the Father**  
**Except through me.'**  
**Alleluia!**

## A Reading From the Holy Gospel According To John 14: 1-12

**Jesus** said to his disciples:

**'Do not let your hearts be troubled.  
Trust in God still, and trust in me.  
There are many rooms in my Father's house;  
if there were not, I should have told you.  
I am going now to prepare a place for you,  
and after I have gone and prepared you a place,  
I shall return to take you with me;  
so that where I am you may be too.  
You know the way to the place where I am going.'**

**Thomas** said,

**'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'**

**Jesus** said:

**'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.  
No one can come to the Father except through me.  
If you know me, you know my Father too.  
From this moment you know him and have seen him.'**

**Philip** said,

**'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.'**

**Jesus** replied,

**'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' 'and you still do not know me?  
To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see  
the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in  
me?**

**The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living  
in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in  
the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if  
for no other reason.**

**I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same  
works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am  
going to the Father.'**

**THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD**