

Thoughts on the Daily Word

20th Week of Year. Friday 21st August. Readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm: 106; Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40.

Ezekiel is facing a people who have lost hope in the God of the Covenant. They are what Moses found in Egypt, a rabble, without hope or vision. It took Moses forty years to weld them into a nation, a people. To do that they needed to internalise the vision and come together. The seemingly endless battles in the desert were what made them rely on and support each other, perhaps even to die for each other. It is a basic human need. We remember the Second World War as we do not only because we were victorious but because we came together as a nation, a people, fought together and died together. Ezekiel and others like him had to spend forty years in Babylon teaching his rabble just how to do the same before they were ready to return. We had a glimpse of that in this pandemic but then it was so easily lost when events like 'partygate' seemed to be a return to distinctions and self-seeking. Such is our frail humanity. We Christians are meant to be the 'remnant' who see ourselves as the leaven which dies to revitalise the whole people. A big task, but it requires new hope and courage and above all the vision to see where we are going. The love that Jesus reveals in the Gospel is the life-giving power to make that happen.