

**Thoughts on the Daily Word**

*1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent. Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February. Readings: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalm: 129; Matthew 5:20-26.*

Once again, the wisdom of the past story of Israel calls us to conversion. Ezekiel speaks about the terrible time of the exile in Babylon, five hundred years before Christ. The infidelity of Israel to the Covenant wreaks its reward. Israel has to go back into a new kind of desert and reattach herself to the God of the Covenant. Just like the journey in the desert, so the putative Christian must make a decision on following the Covenant and commit themselves to the People of God. In the story of Israel too often Israelites went with the way of the world. Behaving like the peoples around them, worshipping their gods and behaving like them. Ezekiel demands a new sense of personal decision and commitment with all the responsibilities that go with it. Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel has the same, even deeper challenge of personal decision. Even thinking abusive thoughts can lead to failure and disaster. This is in the context of a new People. Formed from the nations and challenged to form a new People, the Body of Christ. It will be like the faithful remnant, so often left behind to start again.