

Thoughts on the Daily Word

16th Week of Year. Monday 20th July. Readings: Micah 6:1-4,6-8; Psalm: 49; Matthew 12:38-42.

I have only twice had to face the full force of the law. Both times to do with motor cars. The first was being found on the streets of Durham, one Sunday afternoon when I was out with my girlfriend, trying to impress her with my old banger of a car. I had just painted it a bright blue so that it stood out like a sore thumb! Unfortunately, unknown to me it had a bald tyre. I was summoned to the Police Station to explain myself. Mortified I could just own up but then realised that they were trying to accuse me of not being insured or not owning the car. I found the experience terrifying because I knew that I was guilty but found myself trying to justify my failure to spot the, slightly, bald tyre. Israel is being tried in the first reading and tries to justify its failures through sacrifices, only to find them dismissed as being incompatible with the Covenant, a legal agreement between God and Israel. Israel is playing fast and loose with the Covenant made with Moses but refuses to listen and tries to justify itself by its sacrificial symbols. Micah will tell them that unless they change judgment will come. A trial is going on between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees demand signs or symbols while Jesus refuses their demands and instead demands right behaviour as the true sign just like Micah, Jonah, and the other prophets. Signs or symbols can be powerful but only in the context of obedience to the Covenant both Old and New.