

Thoughts on the Daily Word

9th Week of Year. Tuesday 2nd June. Readings: 2 Peter 3:11-15,17-18; Psalm 89; Mark 12:13-17.

As we enter ever more deeply into God's Word the challenge we face is essentially about freedom. What is freedom? The confrontation with Jesus in the gospel story is between people brought up in a unique way, for thousands of years, to search for liberation. They began as outcasts and slaves, the least in the developing world of civilisation. Perhaps they were the throwbacks to a world before agriculture and cities. Their lives move from just perilous existence to a journey. The word 'journey' means a purposeful movement, from chaos to adventure. That is just how the bible starts in Genesis, from chaos of darkness and water to a potentially meaningful world in which human beings discover that they have been given a vital role. They mess it up by trying to make it their own instead of accepting it as a gift. Grace is there from the beginning and the Creator refuses to take it away, despite the constant failure of human beings to live on grace. Both readings today express the continued tension of being in the world but not of it. In other words, the kind of world in which we live can be destructive and alienating or it can be a journey into freedom. The pharisees talk about freedom as law while keeping the symbol of brute, Roman, power in their pockets, hidden away. Jesus exposes their, and our, hypocrisy. Real freedom, that is our true selves, only becomes possible by a radical change, inside, an experience of inner grace. Paul calls it living by the Spirit rather than law. It doesn't make law useless but reveals, according to St. Augustine, 'Love and do what you will'. Dangerous stuff!