

Thoughts on the Daily Word:

18th Week of Year. Thursday 4th August. Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 50; Gospel: Matthew 16:13-23.

Sometimes it feels that we live in good times. The freedom to speak and express ourselves, to be who we are, all these things recognise our individuality. How different it seems from times in the not-so-distant past. Democracy and individual human rights have not been around long and are still denied and threatened in large parts of the world. It is still a work in progress. The reading today, in very different times, mark significant changes in Israel's history. Essentially the movement from being a racial clan to being a community of individuals who freely choose what they believe to be right. This is, however, where the challenge is expressed. It is the choice and personal decision of Simon, but the result has immense implications. Becoming the foundation of a new community. Simon, now Peter, will struggle with that. Just as we struggle with the implications of personal choice. Whether it is the unborn, the handicapped or the dying. Freedom brings responsibility. That can be the bit we struggle with, just as did Peter, until he received the Holy Spirit that brought the Church to life.