

Thoughts on the Daily Word:

2nd Week of Year. Thursday 19th January 2023, Readings: Hebrews 7:25-8:6; Psalm: 39; Gospel: Mark 3:7-12.

Priesthood, like royalty, in the ancient world was the essential means of having control over a dangerous and fragile world. Scientists and science probably take on that role today. Priesthood was a form of science, hence their role in the development of astronomy and astrology in the ancient world. The great unknown was symbolised by religious idols that could be known and controlled by experts, hence the priesthood. The Old Covenant reflects something of that need while time and time again the God of the Covenant tells them that it is the relationship with Him, as expressed in the Covenant, that matters. He tells them that He cannot be manipulated by idol worship, but they keep trying. In Israel, the prophets and priests become the principal means of relating to and understanding their unique God. The Old Testament often reveals a tension between the prophets, some of whom were hereditary, and the Temple with its priesthood, a role that was hereditary. Jesus reveals a new kind of priesthood, not a pattern of manipulation or an inherited skill but a new and deeper relationship. The Letter to the Hebrews tries to unpack this priesthood, unique to Christ himself, and what it means for his Church. In the Gospels silencing the demons or unclean spirits reveals the power of Jesus over them as they attempted to control him by declaring who he was. This is putting a stop to the attempts to manipulate either God or other people. Hence the revelation of true freedom.