

### **Thoughts on the Daily Word**

16<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year. *Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July. Readings: Jeremiah 3:14-17; Jeremiah 31:10d; Matthew 13:18-23.*

The prophecy of Jeremiah reflects the pattern of God's dealing not only with Israel but all of humanity. Once again it is the pattern of the remnant. Surviving through slavery, exile, and exodus to return to the place of redemption and freedom. Zion is the symbol of that homecoming. The imagery is that of a loving parent, head of a family, who looks after wayward children despite their obstinacy, bringing them home. In Scripture the image of heart is not our romantic and sentimental image about feelings. The Biblical heart is the place of learning, decision, and commitment. In both our readings today the word emphasises understanding, something that must begin in the heart as understood in Scripture. We sometimes think of understanding in a quasi-scientific or objective way in our time. To us understanding comes before commitment. In the Bible you can't understand really without an open-hearted commitment or engagement. In the Scripture it has to begin with a personal relationship before any real understanding can take place. I remember that famous expression about needing to walk in someone's footsteps or shoes before we can really understand them. I am no scientist, but I heard that in physics it is understood that at a certain level of reality the observer effects that which he observes! As a onetime student of history and sociology we know that only too well. Unfortunately, not recognising that reality leads to some scary decisions. Deepening our Catholic faith is that deliberate challenge to grow in understanding, to grow in relationship with God's Word, to come home.