

Sexagesima 2014
Sermon • Christ Church Parish
Father John Altberg
2 Corinthians 11.19 Luke 8.4



Things are not going real well...better call on God......the readily applied approach when 6c Italy was visited by dark days...Lombards invaded, barbarian practices, earthquakes, famine and disease were running rampant. Under this umbrella Pope Gregory the Great called for full attention to prayer for better days...people turned readily to God for answers. Talk radio and television were unavailable...

Though current times not characterized by every problem besetting 6c Italy, there are more than a few similarities...the unsettled geopolitical situation alone has us looking over our shoulders...anxiety is apparent...we note Western culture turning to increasingly bankrupt sociological frivolities as an antidote. Some are too 'polite' to identify the fractious elements in the Church and global threats to peace as 'barbarians'...but we are well advised to observe history does have a way of repeating itself...just with increasingly sophisticated, duplicitous and destructive deceptions.

In Apostolic times St Paul founded the Church in Corinth, entrusted its healthy state to others...they did not stay on course. Some Corinthian Church shepherds interjected their sectarian, theological and social views...what we might today call 'inclusiveness'. St. Paul was not impressed...with abundant clarity told them so! History repeated 1500 years later with the ravages of the Continental Reformation...an event commencing quite reasonably enough but spun out of control destroying some of the very elements of the Church it was intended to protect.

Last week I was engaged in a frank discussion about destructive dissent brought to my attention...my conversationalist, one very close to me, listened patiently and responded...

"John, remember those Corinthians...why do you think they got those letters...?"
"Uhhh...yes" said I.

Later in the week I commenced consideration of today's sermon and looked at the Epistle...my lights went on quickly...!

Plant, Stay on Course...Grow......do not become distracted by Corinthian corruption...the conjoined themes of today's Gospel and Epistle...

Our challenge is just as St Paul's in the face of an increasingly secularized culture distracting the Church. Accompanied by a warning against pride, self-righteousness and self indulgence, we stay the course. Our very reason for being is commitment to traditional Catholic teaching and practice ...the Faith is NOT subject to compromise or whimsical modification. The concept of voting to change God to fit the emotion of the moment is a deadly fraud!

Listen to the point Archbishop Haverland made addressing a 2006 conference.

"The animating principle in the Affirmation of St Louis is self-conscious adherence to the central Tradition of Christendom. That principle, whatever its short-term or institutional effects, is directly opposed to sectarianism. It rests on the observation that Anglicanism in fact went astray precisely by its own susceptibility to sectarian impulses-what we might call the will to heresy. To avoid a repetition we must strap ourselves to the mast of the central Tradition so as to resist the Siren song of heresy."

We need to take action on those things...all centering on growth...the nurtured growth Jesus explained in today's Gospel.

What lies ahead is profoundly illuminated ...there is much ground to be plowed...we have many seeds to sow...inevitably some will fall on infertile ground and, to be certain, that will be frustrating. But if we do the right job of planting, some of those seeds will take root...the result will be spiritually prosperous.

St Paul lacked no clarity about where the Church stands. Pray for the parish entrusted to our care...what we have planted...the blessings that have come to us...what we must do in order to bring yet a more abundant harvest.

