



Tuesday 17th August 2021
20th Week in Ordinary Time Year 1

First Reading

Jgs 6:11-24

A reading from the book of Judges

Gideon, you will free Israel. Do I not send you?

The angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah which belonged to Joash of Abiezer. Gideon his son was threshing wheat inside the winepress to keep it hidden from Midian, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, 'The Lord is with you, valiant warrior!' Gideon answered him, 'Forgive me, my lord, but if the Lord is with us, then why is it that all this is happening to us now? And where are all the wonders our ancestors tell us of when they say, "Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt?" But now the Lord has deserted us; he has abandoned us to Midian.'

At this the Lord turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength now upholding you, and you will rescue Israel from the power of Midian. Do I not send you myself?' Gideon answered him, 'Forgive me, my lord, but how can I deliver Israel? My clan, you must know, is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least important in my family,' The Lord answered him, 'I will be with you and you shall crush Midian as though it were a single man. Gideon said to him, 'If I have found favour in your sight, give me a sign that it is you who speak to me. I beg you, do not go away until I come back, I will bring you my offering and set it down before you.' And he answered, 'I will stay until you return.'

Gideon went away and prepared a young goat and made unleavened cakes with an ephah of flour. He put the meat into a basket and the broth into a pot, then brought it all to him under the terebinth. As he came near, the angel of the Lord said to him, 'Take the meat and unleavened cakes, put them on this rock and pour the broth over them.' Gideon did so. Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff in his hand and touched the meat and unleavened cakes. Fire sprang from the rock and consumed the meat and unleavened cakes, and the angel of the Lord vanished before his eyes. Then Gideon knew this was the angel of the Lord, and he said, 'Alas, my Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!' The Lord answered him, 'Peace be with you; have no fear; you will not die.' Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it The-Lord-is-Peace.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 84:9. 11-14. R. v.9

(R.) The Lord speaks of peace to his people.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people and his friends
and those who turn to him in their hearts. **(R.)**
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. **(R.)**
3. The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. **(R.)**

Gospel

Mt 19:23-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you solemnly, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, I tell you again, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.' When the disciples heard this they were astonished. 'Who can be saved, then?' they said. Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he told them 'this is impossible; for God everything is possible.'

Then Peter spoke. 'What about us?' he said to him. 'We have left everything and followed you. What are we to have, then?' Jesus said to him, 'I tell you solemnly, when all is made new and the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory, you will yourselves sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life.

'Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.'



Reflection - Fr John Lovell

Today's Gospel teaching is one that would challenge many in our affluent Western nations today. Even the disciples were so surprised by the Lord's words that they exclaimed, "Who can be saved, then?"

Can a camel pass through the eye of a needle? It sounds impossible, doesn't it! Yet, no more impossible than for someone to be saved without God's help. The problem with having too much comfort and wealth, is that human beings can become complacent and forget their need of God, and say "I'm alright Jack. Who needs help from above when I have all I need here on Earth!"

Another interpretation of this passage is that the 'Eye of the needle' was a name given by Jews to a hole in the walls of ancient Jerusalem that could be used by travelers arriving after sunset when the main gates had been closed for the night. With great difficulty a camel on its knees and unloaded could squeeze through with some helpers to push from behind. So the lesson would be: don't leave your arrival at the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem (that is your coming to faith) too late, and if you do, you will need to be prepared to let go of all your worldly baggage and be happy to accept some help from others to get you in.

Our prayers for those in our world who don't know their need of God may be just the help they need to get into Heaven.

**Generous God,
fill us with compassion and concern for others, young and old,
that we may look after one another in these challenging days.
Bring healing to those who are sick with the virus and be with their families.
May those who have become complacent with the following of stay-at-home measures or mask wearing, renew their sense of solidarity with all in society.
Strengthen and protect all medical professionals caring for the sick
and all who work in our medical and testing facilities.
Give wisdom to leaders in healthcare and governance
that they may make the right decisions for the well-being of people.
We pray in gratitude for all those in our country who continue to work in the days
ahead in so many fields of life for the sake of us all.
Bless them and keep them safe.**

Amen

Adam Frost