

Lent V – 6.4.14

Last week we thought upon seeing the other person as made in the image of God, and that this meant a transfiguration in us. If this feels to be an over statement we have to ask ourselves, What then is the Gospel? What then is this Good News? Some thoughts of today's gospel shed light on the transformation that Jesus brings.

“If a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death”. He, our Lord, has already said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death”. How can this be?

Well, also a little earlier in John's Gospel we have these words from Our Lord – he is speaking to the Jews – those prepared to be Jesus' disciples. He says, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed”. And – note these words, “Ye shall know the truth. And the truth shall make you free”. Have that thought in mind as we consider a little diversion.

A.N. Wilson in the Telegraph has written an article on the grail – the holy grail – that bowl or chalice that Jesus used at the last supper. He, Wilson, subscribes to the view that the pursuit of the holy grail by the Knights of the round table was a form of madness. A pursuit that is seen as a distraction from rescuing maidens from dragons, and from fighting for their King.

There are various views on the grail. Wilson's amusing scepticism probably takes us along with it. Certainly he makes an important point.

He questions the whole point of the pursuit of the holy grail. Seeking the grail is, we suppose, to seek a greater nearness, a greater awareness of Our Lord's presence.

The point for those who attend the Eucharist is that we find our living Lord in that service. That service wherein the chalice is lifted above every Christian altar. Beside this mysterious existential experience, the actual possession of the grail would be totally peripheral.

Back to that thought we have kept in mind, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”. That truth is in his Word. That truth is in our discipleship.

Negatively, if we do not hear his Word – if we do not listen to his Word – if we do not have a disciplined discipleship – then all else we do is peripheral.

Positively – hearing his Word – taking up our Cross – we are made free.

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