

Easter I – 27.4.14

“Peace be unto you”. And again when “he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you.” Peace of which Our Lord not only speaks but that he embodies. To see the depth of this peace that he brings it helps to put it in the context of Jewish history. A lonely figure, Miciah a prophet of integrity in the reign of Ahab, King of Israel, speaks of peace. The situation is that Ahab plans war against Syria – and knowing that a number of so-called prophets will say what he (the King) wishes to hear – he asks them, “Should he go into battle?” They, to a man, say, “to go and enjoy the victory”. But something within Ahab means that he must perforce also ask Miciah. And Miciah’s view of what will come about is the opposite to those who first prophesy. And that Ahab will be defeated.

In face of this fearless openness of Miciah, the King of Israel said, “Take Miciah and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city and say, thus saith the King, “Put Michiah in prison and feed him with the bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.”

And from Miciah, in words of one syllable – “If thou come at all in peace the Lord hath not spoken by me”.

This picture obtains in much of the world for the 21st century often with the same truth. There can be no peace where there is no righteousness – where there is no justice. And this is narrowed down, to anyone who wishes to be whole, that we have no peace within ourselves if we remain fragmented – not broken, that is a different concept. Very often we need to be broken lest we be fragmented.

Jesus was broken for us – he chose to know peace – and was made “to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians).

Latterly it is brought to our attention that today there are fewer and fewer vocations to the varied monastic orders.

This can only mean that there is an absence – an unawareness of contemplative prayer – of God being central to our being – of his being central to all that is – an unawareness of God’s invitation to his friendship.

And it maybe that we side-step the most decisive point on our considerations this morning – and that is Ahab’s knowing that he has to hear Miciah’s opinion on what he should do. We are left with the question, Why is it so imperative that Ahab should ask this of Miciah?

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