

Lent III – 23.3.14

This woman of today's Gospel is looking further than she can see. Our calling entirely.

She speaks of Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts that suckled thee".

And it is Our Lord's reply that would have her look even further, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it".

We speak of giving up things for Lent, because self-denial is an important discipline. But, as important is our taking-on a discipline, one perhaps that we have lost. And that is a reading of the Holy Scriptures.

Jesus speaks of hearing the Word of God – and keeping it. Well of course the Word of God as in the New Testament was not yet. But to those hearing Jesus, that Word was to be discerned in the Old Testament – it was to be discovered afresh.

Hear the treasure of the Old Testament revealed through the words attributed to Moses, in the Book Deuteronomy (Ch.4 vv.5-8). What nation can know this blessedness? A blessedness that Israel is called upon to make known to and for the whole world – a calling in which they, Israel, failed – except for one alone who remained faithful. That one alone who is our Saviour. That one alone who would have us spend time with him for he loves us. If it feels that we fall short of loving him, that prayer of "Thanks" proves very relevant:

"Thanks be to thee our Lord Jesus
for all the pain and insults thou hast borne for us
for all the many benefits thou hast won for us
O merciful Redeemer our friend and our brother
may we know thee more clearly
love thee more dearly
and follow thee more nearly, every day."

We approach Holy Week and the Passion of our dear Lord. And we have noted the place that the Scriptures should have in our life. We do well, figuratively speaking, to "mark the first page of the book with a red marker. For in the beginning, the wound is invisible". (Rob Alce)

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