

Reflection Wednesday 17th March

Jeremiah 18: 18 -20

A Plot against Jeremiah

18 Then they said, 'Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah—for instruction shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us bring charges against him, and let us not heed any of his words.'

19 Give heed to me, O Lord,
and listen to what my adversaries say!

20 Is evil a recompense for good?
Yet they have dug a pit for my life.
Remember how I stood before you
to speak good for them,
to turn away your wrath from them.

There are times when people are just not grateful for intervention on their behalf. Jeremiah was standing before God and the people declaring a message from God and defending the people; and so the people plot against him. "Is evil a recompense for good?" Jeremiah is frustrated.

There are times when we can wonder "is it worth it?" There are some careers that you wonder why people enter them for they find themselves stuck so often between a rock and a hard place.

When I was working in Newport I was involved with a number of Action For Children projects. I got to know a number of the social workers and felt for those particularly who were working in local authority situations. They had too many cases to have time to give each one the necessary attention yet when things went wrong the press rose up against them; when they calmly got on and achieved a great deal they got no credit.

I knew a driver who worked for a funeral director who was a qualified paramedic; he left the ambulance service due to the fear of litigation if he made a mistake whilst responding to a call.

I know of local Councillors who give so much time to the community that it can affect their family life; they get little or no recognition for their concern and help just accused of seeking power or money.

During the last 12 months the appreciation of the role of many people in our society has changed. So many of the people who have kept the community and society going are people were easily overlooked previously.

In our daily living we need to show appreciation for those who give so much for little reward and/or recognition. At an online Holy Habits study group on Monday evening we reflected upon the story of Zacchaeus. We were asked questions about how we treat the "little people" in our community – (who would you define as a little person?). We were asked about "muttering" for that is what the religious did when Jesus gave time to Zacchaeus. Who do you mutter about under your breath or mutter about with others? What damage could you be doing to them?

Think what it would be like to be muttered about? What damage could that be doing to you amongst others?

Jeremiah sought to help his people "Remember how I stood before you to speak good for them, to turn away your wrath from them." Those who he stood up for were plotting against him. Being faithful to God does not mean we face no opposition, in many senses it can be a cause for greater opposition, but ultimately we know we are doing what we are called to.

In our daily living let us not just be mutterers of opposition but proclaimers of truth; appreciators of the good that others are doing, then, when we speak out perhaps we will be listened to for making a fair call.

A Prayer.

Lord we pray for those in our communities who are working under immense pressure in these days, in the health service, social work, emergency services and education. We remember the "little people" who quietly get on with their roles, paid or voluntary, who make a difference to our daily living; may we show to them our appreciation. Give to us thankful hearts and generous spirits. Amen.