

The 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time 2020

This weekend is Saturday the 1 & Sunday the 2 August, beginning the 18th week of Ordinary Time.

One Hope Project sing, 'Romans 5:8'.

The readings this week have offered images of how God works with human beings, and how human beings in turn respond. Images of the kingdom like a tiny seed, or hidden yeast, growing and influencing the world around it. Images of a potter, shaping and reshaping the clay until it turns out right. Martha responds with faith, that Jesus can help even her dead brother. Paul, like Ignatius of Loyola after him, tries to do everything for God's glory. This weekend's reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans, speaks of the outcome of this divine work and human response.

Romans 8:35,37-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul here has great confidence that ultimately nothing can separate us from God's love. How does that sound to you on a first hearing today?

He nevertheless lists things that might seem to come between him and God. But this is his list. What are the things that get in the way between you and God?

Paul wants, in what he writes here, to share his confidence with the reader. Let yourself be caught up in the poetry of what he says as you hear the passage again.

Maybe you share Paul's confidence. Maybe you're less sure. Speak honestly with God for a moment or two about how you react to God's promise of an unshakeable love for you.

Using the Suscipe Prayer of St Ignatius of Loyola:

You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.