

## St Jerome | Wednesday 30 September 2020

Today is Wednesday the 30 September, the Feast of St Jerome.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo sing: 'We Nhliziyo yami': 'O my heart be wise when your enemies surround you. Keep praying; ask the Lord for help. For he is powerful. That is your weapon; do not lose it. Pray without ceasing, for the Lord is powerful.'

Today's reading is from the Book of Job.

Job 9:1-12,14-16

Job spoke next. He said: Indeed, I know it is as you say: how can man be in the right against God? If any were so rash as to challenge him for reasons, one in a thousand would be more than they could answer. His heart is wise, and his strength is great: who then can successfully defy him? He moves the mountains, though they do not know it; he throws them down when he is angry. He shakes the earth, and moves it from its place, making all its pillars tremble. The sun, at his command, forbears to rise, and on the stars he sets a seal. He and no other stretched out the skies, and trampled the Sea's tall waves. The Bear, Orion too, are of his making, the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South. His works are great, beyond all reckoning, his marvels, past all counting. Were he to pass me, I should not see him, nor detect his stealthy movement. Were he to snatch a prize, who could prevent him, or dare to say, 'What are you doing?' How dare I plead my cause, then, or choose arguments against him? Suppose I am in the right, what use is my defence? For he whom I must sue is judge as well. If he deigned to answer my citation, could I be sure that he would listen to my voice?

Job was a figure who, despite enormous, undeserved suffering – in the face of disaster after disaster in which he lost everything he held dear and cursed the day he was born – somehow still managed to retain his faith in the greatness of God. Have there been times in your life when your faith has been tested in this way, when it felt like God was punishing you unfairly, when you found it difficult to believe that God was on your side?

If you can recall such a time in your life, can you remember how things moved on? Did the suffering end? Did things get better? Or did you come to a different understanding of what was going on? - to a different relationship with God, perhaps?

Recalling again that testing time in your life and how it felt, listen to this reading again. How do Job's words sound to you in your own context? How do they speak to you in your own situation at that time?

'Could I be sure that he would listen to my voice?' Well, you can. God is present here now, ready to listen to you. Speak to him about anything that has come up for you during this time of prayer, about the tough times you've gone through perhaps, about the difficulty you sometimes have in believing. Speak to him honestly, as one friend speaks to another.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.