

Wednesday 18 November 2020

Today is Wednesday the 18 November, in the 33rd week of Ordinary Time.

Moira Smiley sings “Keep Me Safe O God”, a setting of Psalm 16 by Steven Faux. Pause now, and reflect back a little on the ways God has kept you safe in your life... how he keeps you safe now...

Our reading today is from the final chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Arrested in Jerusalem and brought before various Roman governors, Paul as a Roman citizen, appealed to have his case heard by the Emperor himself in Rome. The journey to Italy had been perilous. Paul and the crew were buffeted by storms, they lost all their gear and finally the ship was wrecked off the island of Malta and they were forced to wait for a change in weather before continuing. Luke’s account was probably written from notes he took on the voyage... bear this in mind as you hear today’s reading:

Acts 28:11-16, 30-31

Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. We put in at Syracuse & stayed there for three days; then we weighed anchor & came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, & on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found believers & were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

He lived there for two whole years at his own expense & welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Luke describes the ship and the journey from Malta to Sicily and on to Puteoli the port where all the ships unloaded as they brought grain from Egypt to Rome. Paul had never been to Italy before and, as we know from his letter to the Romans, he was anxious to allay any fears the community may have had about him. Yet here, 130 miles from Rome, he meets Christians who welcome him and invite him and his companions to stay with them. What do you think this would have felt like for Paul?

When he continues towards Rome, Christians come out to welcome him at various places. In what ways have you been supported and accepted by others?

“Paul thanked God and took courage.” When have you needed courage in living out your faith?

After all the ups & downs of the journey, listen again to Paul’s reaction as he is welcomed along the way.

Spend a few moments now thanking God for those who have helped and supported you... Bring before the Lord someone who needs your comfort and support today.

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.