

## Friday 5 March 2021

Today is Friday the 5 March, in the second week of Lent.

Josh Garrels sings 'Fear Thou Not'.

Today's reading is from the Book of Genesis.

Genesis 37:3-4,12-13,17-28

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves.[a] But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am."

The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves[a] that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew

Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

What feelings does it provoke in you when you hear this well-known story of Joseph and his brothers? Anger at the way he is treated? Or at the father's blatant favouritism, perhaps? Or puzzlement at how the others could feel that way about their own brother?

Do you identify with any of the characters? With the young brother they are all jealous of? With the dreamer? With the older brothers who harbour resentment?

As you hear the story read again, imagine what it was like – imagine the tone of their voices, the looks on their faces, the feelings in their hearts.

Jealousy and resentment are not unusual feelings for human beings. Most of us try to control ourselves, but we can't help feeling that way some of the time. As this time of prayer comes to an end, this might be a good moment to bring those feelings before the Lord – feelings of jealousy or resentment you have had, perhaps that you are still harbouring now...

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.