

Thought for the day 20th June 2020 from Tony Whatmough

Luke 12:49-51

49 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!'



Was Jesus ever angry? Today's reading suggests that he certainly was!

But what was the cause of such anger? Jesus' intense frustration seems to leap out from the page in this reading. Jesus came to preach peace and reconciliation, but he received aggressive confrontation from the religious leaders whom he would have expected to support him and understand his mission. Indeed, St. Luke's Gospel as a whole is addressed to a Gentile audience, who seemed more accepting of the teaching of Jesus than the religious authorities of his own land.

We like to think that truth will bring peace and harmony, but so often, as Jesus found out, it brings division. People sometimes feel they are being pushed into a corner, and fight back. We can see this happening in this reading both to Jesus and to those who opposed him.

So how did Jesus deal with such frustration? We hear numerous times about how he often went away to a quiet place, away from the crowds to be by himself with God. There in peace, he could restore his emotional balance.

In these ongoing days of lockdown, perhaps we can emphasise with him. Many people I have spoken to on the phone have expressed such frustration of not being able to go out and meet people, not being able to give family and friends a hug, not being able to go out where and when we want, and it is tempting to cast caution to the winds.

If you're feeling this way, perhaps this short step-by-step mindfulness exercise might help, accompanying Jesus to his quiet place.

- Try and take a SLOW breath between each sentence!
- Stand still
- Notice the weight of the phone or perhaps a small object in your hand
- Let your other hand drop by your side
- Push your feet into the ground
- Pick a colour
- Imagine this colour draining down through your body - starting with the head - take your time
- When you reach the feet - imagine the colour moving out into the floor
- Softly smile
- And breathe feeling the peace of God flow through you.