

Thought for the day 29th May 2020 from Jan Betts (All Hallows)

Numbers 27 12-end and Luke 8 40- end

How do we deal with being made to feel we are not 'useful' any more? During 'lockdown' many of us are redefining what it means to be useful. We may be shut away as 'vulnerable', we may be furloughed, we may have lost our job, we may have lost our volunteering opportunities. Suddenly many of the things we did to be useful, to matter in society, are being taken away. We are left with a feeling of helplessness and only being onlookers in the drama unfolding around us. We may be told that 'staying home' is our only contribution.

Moses led the children of Israel to right within sight of the land which God had promised them, as the acknowledged leader of this group, the mouthpiece of God. It must have been heart-breaking to see the land and to know that because of his failures in leadership he wasn't allowed to be there at the end of the journey.

But *'Moses was extremely humble, the humblest man on earth'*. (Numbers 12:3) Humility isn't something we often hear praised as a virtue in leadership - if only!! Moses' humility lay in listening to God and being willing to obey, even when he sometimes got it wrong. His total focus was not on himself but on the job God had given him to do.

We see that humility carried on in today's story from Numbers. Moses calmly asks God to appoint a leader who will do the new job of settling the people into the land. 'Come and die', invites God, 'your work is done.' In Deuteronomy we read that Moses' 'eyes were undimmed and his vigour unimpaired' when he died, but his usefulness had come to an end.

In our three churches, lockdown is teaching us about sharing or passing on or accepting leadership as individuals are no longer able to do the work they have always done. It takes courage to say 'someone else can share my role' and it takes vision to accept that the work of God, leading people into a 'new normal', may have to be done differently.

Let's today pray for our national leaders that they will have the humility to step back from the old ways, and the courage to see that a new order is coming, with a new vision needed. Let's pray for our clergy as they share their role in 'lockdown' and let's pray for ourselves that we can see and rejoice in the new roles which are being offered to help lead our communities into new ways of being. Above all let's remember Jesus who humbled himself in obedience to become one of us and show us the way of humility and love and death and resurrection.

