

Gary's reflection 16 November

When I looked up today's Gospel reading I had the same feeling that I have when I watch the news on television lately. There seems to be little of a positive nature with reports of slaughter in the Ukraine and in Gaza and in the Sudan just to name a few of the world's trouble spots along with millions starving throughout the world and the plight of refugees, including innocent women and children, not to mention global warming and how changes in weather patterns are of a major concern for now and especially for the future. It is sometimes difficult to find any news to warm the heart!

Today's gospel is similar in that Jesus tells his disciples that the temple – the illustrious temple that stood taking up nearly a quarter of Jerusalem - would be utterly destroyed without one stone left on another.

The Temple was not only large in size but it was also large in significance, it was one of the very foundations of the Jewish faith. It was the place where sacrifices were laid out in the Old Testament to be offered. It was God's house which contained the holy of holies – the sacred space in which they believed God himself dwelt and into which only the high priest would go only once a year on the Day of Atonement. It was the centre for the hustle and bustle of the various annual feasts and festivals.

And the disciples hear that the temple is going to be razed to the ground. They

were more likely to expect that Jesus would speak of the destruction of the Romans who occupied Jerusalem or of the fall of Rome itself. But instead he tells them that it is their house that is going to fall, an event which actually happened at the hands of the Romans in 70AD.

There have been many times in the past where the message to the people has been one of hope. During the Second World War the words ***“keep calm and carry on”*** were displayed and emphasised in the UK in those times of great worry and extreme pessimism.

It was a very hard thing for the followers of Jesus to hear also. But while they might have needed to hear ***“keep calm and carry on”***, the first message that Jesus gave them was “keep calm and don’t be lead astray”. Many will come in my name saying “I am he” - but don’t believe them and don’t follow after them.

Today and always there have been people who want to control and rule.

Humans often crave too much for the power that leads to controlling the lives of others and this again is what we see today in the Ukraine and in Palestine and in the Sudan and in many parts of our world where the privileged do nothing to reach out to the poor and desperate, living lives without hope.

Jesus chose not to rule over the lives of others! The kingdom of God was built on equal measures of love and mercy, a God who is known through

brokenness and suffering as witnessed on the cross. It was a path of vulnerability for our sakes, of Jesus on the cross whose heart was broken in concern for those who find themselves caught up living lives where there is little or no hope as witnessed then and is witnessed today. The message to ***keep calm and carry on*** has always been and always be one of hope but it should very much come from the hearts of those who have the power to change things for the better.

There is no such thing as a fully Christian nation or political party. There are however Christian people who follow in the footsteps of Jesus, people who have come to know this Jesus who died on the cross and rose again for our sakes. People who are willing embrace their own humanity and suffering in order to bring life and light to those around them. People who live their life knowing they are not perfect but reach out to the needs of others and through this life they share the love of Jesus and his forgiveness.

All this is summed up in a beautiful book written by Charlie Mackesy which has become a best seller written by a humble and loving man to speak to people of all ages titled ***Always Remember The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and the Storm.***

The final message at the end of the book is summed up in a few sentences.

The mole thought this was going to be cake recipe book – so this page is for him.

***The Mole's ingredyents for
Ingredients***

The Cake of love

***A kilo of kindness
A ladle of letting go
A pinch of patience
A gram of gratitude
Heaps of hope
A handful of humility
A jug of joy***

This recipe never fails.

I believe this to be true!!