

Wednesday Word

In reflection on the message for Sunday 3rd September 2023.

Welcome and Call to Worship, from Psalms.

Extracts from Matthew 16, v21-28. **Jesus Predicts His Death.**

v21: Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

V22: Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

“Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

v23: Jesus turned and said to Peter,

“Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.

v24: Then Jesus said to his disciples,

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

v25: For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

v26: What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

v27: For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

v28: Truly I tell you some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Extracts from Romans 12, v9 - 21. **Love in Action.**

v9: Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

v10: Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

v11: Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord

v12: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

v13: Share with the Lord’s people who are in need.

v14: Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

v15: Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

v16: Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people in low positions. Do not be conceited.

v17: Do not repay any evil with evil. Do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

v18: If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with everyone.

V19: Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written, “It is mine to revenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.

v20: On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him: if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

v21: Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Sermon. “Laying our lives down for each other.”- We should show solidarity for each other in our Church Community, by being there for each other with support, whenever we detect a need for love and comfort, heeding the general ‘commandments’ of the reading from Romans. We should carry our cross (v24 of the Matthew reading), that is, overcoming the stumbling block (v23) which restrains us from following the path Jesus wants us to follow often jointly with others. We should be there empathising with those who have fallen by the wayside and seize opportunities to provide comfort for them.