

Homily. 2nd Sunday of Easter. Year.A. 18/19 April 2020.

A few days ago I was talking over the phone to my brother who lives on the Gold Coast. He told me that his one outing for the day was a quiet solo walk along the path around Tallebudgera Creek. I said that I wished I could make such a walk and asked him to tell me what he'd seen. After telling me of the sun, sand and water he said that he'd also seen a lot of people, too. When I asked him what they were doing he said that they were making the same walk, alone or in couples or groups, along this track. He added that when he'd finished he'd stopped by a cafe and bought himself a take-away coffee, something that I never do, adding that a fair number of people were sitting close together at tables in this cafe drinking their coffee. I was a bit taken aback at this and I asked him what he thought of this behaviour. He said that he thought they were stupid, adding that some had said to him that they weren't hurting anybody, just sitting and drinking and minding their own business. I replied that I thought these people were acting in a selfish and entitled way, pleasing themselves, without any care for others or for the common good.

A day or so later I read about a person who flew their private helicopter over to Stradbroke Island, not once but twice, in order to have a picnic. The pilot was fined both times for having ignored clear police directions not to make these flights. Talk about self-indulgent! What more can I say? I then read that another bloke broke his confinement in Western Australia several times, ending up in court with big fines and a jail term. Entitled, immature, selfish in the extreme? Or what else do you call it?

This weekend I'm asking you to contemplate this painting which I bought when I was visiting Kuranda. It hangs on my home office wall directly above my computer.



The indigenous artist, Bununda Coralie Wason, explained to me that it's all about the people, the various mobs, gathering in groups of family and tribe (the 4 large circles) around the white Cross of the Crucified and Risen Lord. The 4 smaller circles at the cardinal points are their leaders, calling them by their teaching and witness to focus on Christ who is surrounded by the white circle representing the saints. The 12 apostles are the dots on each arm of the Cross, with Christ at its centre.

This painting is clearly one that I treasure. It still speaks to me just as it did when I first saw it on the Tableland 10 years ago. It offers us the

Christian vision of community and unselfish co-operation, a way of working together, serving each other for the good of everyone, and not just serving our own personal desires and wants. Its image is the complete opposite to pleasing ourselves, entitlement and selfish individualism.

Some elements in our society and political system, broken as it is, are asking that our economy be restarted forthwith. To these people and pressure groups the economy is everything, a 'god' more important even than our lives. The truth of the matter is that if our economy is so broken that it has to be restarted at the expense of our health and lives, then it is totally broken and unworthy of being started again in the way it was.

The early days and years of Christianity saw the followers gathered as in the painting, small groups drawn in to Christ by the service of their leaders, honouring the sacrifice and witness of the apostles and martyrs, respecting each other and sharing everything in common. This is the spirit that we have to re-capture with now, a spirit of fidelity and protection for all, in particular those most at risk of disease and death before the power of the first wave of this pandemic. It's the Holy Spirit of self-giving love and service that follows the example of the Crucified and Risen Lord who went through suffering, sacrifice and death so that His life might become the life of us all. As you contemplate this painting over the coming week keep repeating the words of our response to the psalm; Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, His love is everlasting.