

Ordinary Sunday 12 A {Pentecost 4} – Sunday 25 June 2023

- Genesis 2.18-21; Psalm 86.1-10, 16-17; Romans 6.1-11; Matthew 10.24-29

In Romans, Paul presents the gospel that we enter into a right relationship with God only by the grace of God, which is a free gift. We receive this gift by putting our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And only by faith: there is nothing else we ourselves can do to earn being put right with God. But for Paul's interlocutors, if a right relationship with God is ours for free, then we can keep on doing bad things because we will always be forgiven anyway. In fact, the more bad things we do the more grace there will be. Grace has no ethic. Paul's answer is that in our baptism, we were baptized into Christ's death which put to death our old life of doing bad things. And gave us new life which enables us to do good. Grace does have an ethic.

- We give thanks that we are put right with God by his free gift through the death and resurrection of Jesus. And that grace does have an ethic.

- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of Province of Myanmar

Text: Michael D St Paul's Cathedral, Sale © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023

Reflection

Coming home to a safe house, warming love, food enough to share, fresh water, clothing bathroom, and luxuries, it is hard to fathom Hagar's experience. Nor understand Sarah and Abraham's greed. There was plenty to share, enough for a united family. Instead, the choice was to tear the family apart, send Hagar and young Ishmael away with little resources, no belongings except the barest minimum, and not even with love. This week, as our awareness of Refugee stories comes into sharper focus, I find this a very difficult reading to understand. Hagar and Ishmael's story mirrors that of many refugees – living in community and family, with home and honour – then cast out like a tiresome pebble in the shoe of success, with a moment's notice..

At God's command? This is not the God I hear who includes, supports, sustains and enfolds. Or is it?

Jesus' teaching speaks with a radical voice that breaks apart the 'idealised family'. In ancient time, the place of identity, security, and belonging, in a society of boundaries and barriers, was imbedded in 'belonging' to an intergenerational family unit, who often lived in an enclosure. So often, in societal breakdowns and wars, it is a member of the family who makes a choice that arises out of their own fear and self-entitlement. Greed corrupts. Violence, in word or action, has devastating and long lasting consequences.

Sometimes, out of necessity or choice, or through being forced out like Hagar with her son, the choice can only be, as Jesus said, to 'shake off the dust' where we are not wanted, and where the peace that we offer is rejected. The grief is profound. The loss

everlasting. Finding freedom, finding peace, is often a most painful journey. Yet, renewal and belonging can be found. God hears our cries and meets us where we are.

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HOLY INNOCENTS ANGLICAN CHURCH BELAIR

Readings - Sunday 25 June 2023 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Sentence

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will find it. **Matthew 10.39**

Collect

Gracious God,
we who were baptised into Christ Jesus
were baptised into his death:
we pray that, as you raised him from death,
so by the power of the Holy Spirit we may live the new life to your glory,
knowing ourselves to be dead in sin
but alive for you in Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

1st Reading - Genesis 21.8-21

⁸ The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' ¹¹ The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. ¹³ As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' ¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. ¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under

one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.' ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰ God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

For the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 86.1-10, 16-17

¹ Incline your ear to me, O God, and answer me:

for I am poor and in misery.

² Preserve my life, for I am faithful:

My God, save your servant who trusts in you.

³ Be merciful to me, O Lord:

for I call to you all the day long.

⁴ O make glad the soul of your servant:

for I put my hope in you, O Lord.

⁵ For you, Lord, are good and forgiving:

**of great and continuing kindness
to all who call upon you.**

⁶ Hear my prayer, O Lord:

and give heed to the voice of my supplication.

⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you:

for you will surely answer.

⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord:

nor are there any deeds like yours.

⁹ All the nations you have made

shall come and worship before you:

O Lord, they shall glorify your name.

¹⁰ For you are great and do marvellous things:

and you alone are God.

¹⁶ Turn to me and be merciful,

give your strength to your servant:

and save the child of your handmaid.

¹⁷ Show me some token of your goodness:

**that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
because you, Lord, are my helper and my comforter.**

Epistle - Romans 6.1-11

¹ What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸ But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

For the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Gospel - Matthew 10.24-39

²⁴ 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! ²⁶ 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. ³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household. ³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is

not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

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