

Pastor's Note

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 16 July 2017

Scottish children for many years have been raised on the tale of Robert the Bruce and the spider. Having failed to win victory repeatedly he was lying in a barn, in hiding and contemplating giving up. While lying there he saw a spider struggling again and again to run a web from one beam to another before finally succeeding. The lesson being - 'if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.'

An adult version of that I heard recently changed it to: "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again - then give up. No point in making a damn fool of yourself." That rather cynical version is perhaps one that speaks to us today, it's how we often feel about things. It seems sensible. But this week's Gospel should show us that it is not how God works. We are used, perhaps, to thinking about the parable of the sower as a measure of ourselves; asking whether we are the rocky ground, or perhaps the ground that gets choked by the thorns of worldly cares. And an examination of conscience in that regard is always worthwhile.

But perhaps we should also focus on the apparent foolishness of God.

The sensible sower would surely concentrate his sowing on the areas more likely to be fruitful and ignore the areas that probably won't produce. But God isn't sensible like that. His word continues to be sown on promising and unpromising areas alike. God continually calls everyone to him, regardless of the likelihood of their responding. The rocky, the shallow, and the thorn-filled areas continue to have the good news of God's call broadcast over them, just as much as the fertile.

We might perhaps reflect on what that means for our own call to spread God's word - and whether there is any place, or person, we can sensibly give up on. Or whether perhaps the foolishness of God should be our guide.

Blessings ~ Fr Chris Denham

Euthanasia Bill ~“Say No to Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia”

Today the NZ Bishops have released their 2017 Election Statement. It begins, with a reminder to love and care for the unborn, vulnerable, disabled people and our elders.

Our Bishops refer to the risks of legalising assisted suicide, something that is now a very real possibility with David Seymour's End of Life Choice Bill being presented to Parliament for its first reading in the next few weeks. The key question for politicians is not about the moral acceptability of euthanasia or assisted society. Above all else, it is their responsibility to consider whether it is possible to draft such a law with adequate safeguards.

Seymour's Bill allows euthanasia and assisted suicide for New Zealanders with non-terminal conditions, including mental illness and many disabilities. The safeguards that are in his Bill simply cannot protect vulnerable people from being pressured into prematurely ending their lives. Much narrower Bills than Seymour's have recently been rejected by parliaments overseas because of the risks they pose for the most vulnerable, in particular those open to the suggestion that they are a burden.

There are postcards available for you to indicate to your local MP your opposition to this Bill. Just fill in your name and electorate and the name of your local MP – there is no cost to post the card.