

## Lent 5 B 2018

This time last week I wasn't at all worried by the snow or the Beast from the East. On my holiday I was merely concerned as to whether or not to take a dip in the swimming pool where I was staying. I don't swim very well in fact and I hardly ever dive in, and even then only from the side. I remember when I was younger though, being with friends who were good swimmers and divers and they were diving off the diving boards and well, goading me a little bit. Now, I wasn't having that so I climbed up the steps to the very highest diving board. Somewhere towards the top after a lot of steps my knees started to shake a little and then when I was at the top I walked to the end of the board and I looked over the edge... and began to ponder...

But finally I said to myself: **No**, this just isn't why I'm here. So I turned away and made a somewhat humble climb-down – literally! But there have been other occasions or **moments** in my life when I have looked over the edge, as it were, and understood: **Yes**, this is what I'm here for, what I'm called to.

And Jesus had one of those **moments** in today's gospel, didn't he?

"What shall I say? Father I don't want this? I don't want to go through with this. I will not accept being tortured to death.

But this is the very reason I am here, to go through this— right through this, and beyond! This is what God is all about. It's what humanity is all about. It's what I am all about." It was like the **moment** in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He had talked the talk about everything being redeemed, even suffering and death, but now he had to be prepared to walk the walk, to walk the way of the cross. It was necessary for him in his life and mission, but it was important for us too, that he should show us the way to live our lives in complete freedom. Freedom from death ultimately, but freedom from everything else as well. We live in fear of many things in our lives. Some are unnecessary or even trivial, like watching horror films, or perhaps diving off the highest diving board. These are optional, other things are not.

Some people are frightened of simply growing old while others live in great freedom embracing and celebrating age. The members of our Diamond club show us great leadership in this regard.

Some people fear illness, weakness or disability, while again, others find fantastic freedom to be the best version of themselves that they can be through accepting and embracing such difficulties.

During this season of Lent whatever sacrifices we have undertaken are giving us greater freedom – perhaps from wasting time, perhaps from cravings, whatever!

But there may well be some specific challenge or difficulty that you need to face up to in the future or even now at this **moment**. There may be fears that you need to overcome with God's help. It may be fear of failure for instance, if you are approaching exams.

You may have fears about a next step that you need to take in a relationship. These are the sort of issues that the question in your prayer journal is getting at this Sunday. God will show you the way ahead.

Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies (even a little), it remains only a single grain but if it does die, does offer some of itself in sacrifice, it will yield a rich harvest – that's what Jesus tells us today. The good steward of life - of time, talent and treasure is prepared to invest, sacrifice or give up whatever it takes. It is the Way of the Cross.