



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
1st Sunday after Trinity – 14th June 2020 8.00am Eucharist
Bible Readings: Romans Chapter 5:1-8, St Matthew Chapter 9:35-end, Chapter 10:8-23
'We boast in our sufferings!'
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Tough times: inspiring times?

I wonder if the African-Americans enduring prejudice and worse in the United States feel sufficiently encouraged in their struggles by the show of solidarity in recent days to say, as St Paul said in his letter to the Romans, 'We boast in our sufferings'? His letter indicates that the Romans were already enduring the harrowing persecution of which Jesus had prophesied, as recorded by St Matthew. Jesus was prophesying with the full knowledge of the persecution that he too would endure leading to his death. Yet, Jesus too is confident in the face of adversity for he says 'The one who endures to the end will be saved' and we know this to be a certainty in the knowledge of his resurrection and ascension.

A pattern for living through tough times

St Paul gives the Romans the benefit of his own experience saying 'suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.' To live by faith and the love of God is an indication of how in tune with God's promises the Roman Christians were.

Do we have the same confidence in our faith?

How do we rise above prejudice when it is directed at us? How can we attain the level of assurance of the Romans when all is not well in our world? How do we gain the endurance, character and hope from our faith, so that we can show it forth in our lives to be a good example and inspiration to other people? Sometimes, in adversity, the right thoughts and words just won't come to mind. There is an 8th century prayer, which I find inspiring as it provides the clearest, simplest guidance to help us plan our day drawing on the love of God to support us. Let me share it with you now:

O Holy Spirit, giver of light and life,
impart to us thoughts better than our own thoughts,
and prayers better than our own prayers,
and powers better than our own powers,
that we may spend and be spent
in the ways of love and goodness,
after the perfect image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

(Gelasian Sacramentary (8th Century))