



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

***30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year B-October 28<sup>th</sup> 2018 -***

***Wadebridge/Tintagel***

***Readings: Jeremiah 31: 7-9, Psalm 125, Hebrews 5: 1-6, Mark 10: 46-52***

A few weeks ago, at the evangelisation group planning and prayer meeting, I asked if anyone would like to suggest a topic they would find useful to cover in a brief Advent course. To my delight and astonishment Mick Corcoran immediately replied, 'Christ in the Old Testament'. Delight because, when I first began preaching as a Catholic priest, one or two people were puzzled by my preaching on the Old Testament at all. Astonishment because it is such a massive subject. Understanding where the Second Person of the Trinity, who will manifest incarnate in Jesus the Christ, operates in and through the history of salvation is a central key to grasping the magnitude of the Faith we profess.

The upshot is that we will have a simple introduction to this huge enterprise on the Wednesday evenings of December 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at the Parish Centre between 7pm and 8.30pm. Each evening will consist of two half hour talks with a coffee break in the middle.

The talks will be on 1) Christ the Word of God. 2) Christ in the history of Salvation. 3) Christ in the Prophets. 4) Christ in the Psalms.

At the end of it the aim is that you will be better able to read and understand the Old Testament and have a clearer view of the enormity of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Never say we are not ambitious!

I sense the stickler for liturgical discipline champing at the bit. 'Good idea, father, but all that should be in the notices. The sermon slot is for exposition of today's readings.' How right you are brother.

Today's epistle reading is from the New Testament book that most closely attempts to understand Christ in the Old Testament and gives us today one of the great insights into the person of Christ from the account of the Genesis. The letter to the Hebrews majors on the High Priesthood of Christ and the nature of the saving sacrifice which we celebrate every time we come to Mass.

It invites us to contemplate the continuity between the Covenants/Testaments and the radical deepening of the priesthood in Jesus Christ. It also invites us to encounter one of the most significant figures in the whole of the Old Testament and what he has to tell us about the One who is and who is to come.

In the figure of the High Priest all the sacrifices of the people, the ritual making holy, the atonement for sin, finds its climax and completion. His annual entry into the Holy of Holies in the Temple, his sacrifice and his unique uttering of the divine name renews the relationship between God and His people.

The letter to the Hebrews understands that, in Jesus Christ, all of that has been completed once and for all. First of all in Christ there is no sin so, as High Priest, He is not offering atonement for Himself but for the people of God. Second, His precious Blood atones eternally for the sins of the world. This is not the blood of animals but the Blood of the Divine life, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the mystery that we receive in the chalice of salvation at Mass. Third, Christ enters the Holy of Holies, not in fear and trembling but as the loving and obedient Son returning to the Father. In doing so He takes our redeemed humanity with Him in His sacred person. This is what the priest is doing with the offering of ourselves in the gifts at the Mass.

And here, stepping out of the pages of salvation history is the archetype of Christ's priesthood. He occupies a mere three verses in the Genesis account but appears at the climax of the Canon of the Mass.

Melchizedek greets Abraham in the hour of his great victory. His name means 'The King of Righteousness' and Scripture tells us that he is, in fact, King of Salem – or Jerusalem as we and later generations will come to know it. He is described as the Priest of the Most High God. He brings, to celebrate the victory of God's people, not the traditional sacrifice of sheep or goat but..... 'BREAD AND WINE'. In this He prefigures and anticipates the mystery of the Mass.

In Melchizedek we see the glimpse of what is to come –

King of Righteousness,

King of the City of Peace, the place where the Divine Presence will dwell.

**The** Priest of the Most High God, the one who blesses the Patriarch Abraham and his seed forever, the people of God.

The one who receives the offering of the people and presents them with the mysterious sacrifice of victory in the bread and the wine.

The Christ figure – the key to the eternal priesthood.

The Go-Between - God and Man.

The New Testament is hidden in the Old.

The Old Testament is revealed in the New.

2018 Fowey Retreat