

On reflecting on today's Gospel reading about the rich young man I wish firstly to go back before we move forwards to explore it in a little detail. By travelling in reverse we encounter the story of Mary and Martha from two weeks ago in which Christ encourages us to slow down and see things differently in case we miss the real essence of what a true encounter with Him is all about. And last week we journeyed towards Jerusalem with Christ 'the platoon commander' as he led from front and took us out of our comfort zones. In both of these stories we were encouraged to see our faith from radically different perspectives than perhaps we are used to.

All of us here today will not necessarily have experienced going into reverse to get here but the new 20 mph speed limit will have slowed us down and certainly for some travelling at over a 30% reduction in the speed limit will have given us a new perspective on what is a well trodden path. We might have noticed something or someone for the first time despite the fact that we have passed them by so often before.

But what of the rich young man ? He thought he was 'so sorted' that his abundance of wealth had created a problem - in his case how he was going to store all the surplus that he had gained? He thought he had found the answer by making more space to contain his excess. However Christ challenges him with regards to what he is creating. Yes the wealth has been created and there appears to be no problem there. However the man has not slowed down to consider how this wealth might be shared and by rushing ahead he is oblivious to the needs of those around him who are not as fortunate as himself. As he speeds off into the distance with his own solution the space that he has created becomes a selfish and self sustaining one and his rush to keep things for himself certainly will leave casualties in his wake. The new space that he has created had been built out of his own perceived success and leaves no room from anyone else.

Christ encourages him and us to think differently. We must imagine ourselves alongside Christ in this parable. Christ's wealth is based around a surfeit of God's love for all his creation. It is a love that encourages us to slow down and reach out the needy on the roadside. Just think of the parable of the Good Samaritan that we explored together earlier in the month. It is a love that has no meaning or value unless it is shared. God does not build a bigger tomb to contain the love of his Son in rather he releases it so that it is no longer stored up for some unforeseen event or difficult time. The world needs God's love now more than ever before.

The space that God creates is unlike that of the rich young man. God's space is created not as a result of his success but rather as a result of his perceived failure - namely the trial and execution of Christ as a common criminal. Reflecting on the Commemoration of the Somme last week Christ was the executed soldier who had deserted his post and had not lived up to the expectations of the all conquering Messiah so eagerly anticipated and waited for.

But ultimately out of his failure he creates a new space whereby the tomb ,which even had a guard posted on it to ensure it remain closed, was broken open and left empty. This empty space would become the hope for us all that whatever this life might throw at us the love for His own Son that God had sacrificed on the cross was now reaching out to all of us.

This idea of brokenness and failure being transformed into an ability to have a new way of

seeing things - a new perspective on our lives in relationship to those around us - is surely what our faith encourages us and challenges us to do and be. It will indeed take us out of our comfort zones just as the words in French do in response to the horror of recent events:

May we too slow down to see things more clearly ,and in so doing love Him and all others more dearly, day by day.

Amen