

## 27A

*A woman was standing at the zebra crossing waiting for the lights to turn green. As she waited, she noticed a young girl at the other side who seemed very distraught. The lights then changed. The woman kept her gaze on the young woman as they approached each other in the middle of the road but despite her wanting to reach out and show she cared, she passed by without any communication whatsoever. For the rest of that day she was haunted by the look of pain on the girl's face, but she was especially tormented by the fact that she did nothing.*

We are not meant to be spectators on life's drama but part of the cast. 'This life is not a dress rehearsal but the real thing'. We shall not pass this way again.

You know, many of the **tears shed at a graveside** are often those of lost opportunities – kind deeds left undone or loving words left unsaid towards the deceased. As they say 'don't keep the cake for the wake or the flowers for the funeral'.

**The Gospel today** is about God offering his chosen people, during the course of their history, opportunities to change for the better, most of which they squander. Parts of their story could easily intertwine with our story. The first reading also emphasises this. God says to His people: "what more could I have done for my people that I have not done".

**God offers everyone opportunities** to grow into the person He wants them to be. I'm not primarily referring here to intellectual development or material advancement or improving social skills but to spiritual and moral growth. The two rarely intertwine. Bodily health is one thing but a healthy soul takes precedence. St Theresa of Calcutta said that she'd often seen healthy souls in sick bodies and sick souls in healthy bodies. It's touched on in the second reading when St Paul says: 'fill your

minds with everything that is noble, good, true, virtuous and pure. Some are adept at making excuses and pass up chances to improve spiritually as persons.

**Sin**, more than anything else, could be described as lost opportunity to become a better more Christ-like person. The Greek translation of the word 'sin' literally means '**missing the mark**'. 'Sin' is wasting valuable time - passing up chances to grow in virtue. Sin likes to lurk in the shadows and causes us to dodge the challenges which God puts in our path to help us grow spiritually. St Paul, in his letter, urges the Ephesians not 'to go on the living the aimless kind of life which the pagans live'. As spiritual beings our focus in life must always be to grow in goodness, truth and above all love.

*Regardless of our background, we all get many opportunities to co-operate with the grace of God. Let's not squander them. As we've seen in today's gospel the Jewish leaders by and large rejected the opportunities Jesus offered them to take on board His message, but to those among his followers who took his words to heart and acted on them, their entry into God's Kingdom was assured.*