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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 her by in silence. For the rest of that the 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 action. 'This life is not a dress rehearsal but the real thing'. Listen to words of wisdom from a famous missionary: "I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

You know, many tears **shed at a graveside** are often those of lost opportunities – good deeds left undone or kind words left unsaid towards the deceased person. 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 pay little heed to. By and large the message of the prophets was given short shrift. The first reading emphasises this. God says to His people: "what more could I have done for my people that I have not done". They say 'eaten bread is soon forgotten'. They had forgotten all that the Lord did for them. When Jesus himself came on to the scene they closed their hearts to him too. Parts of their story could easily intertwine with our story

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 but to spiritual and moral growth. 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. What do we 'fill our minds with'? Some are adept at making excuses and pass up chances to improve the health of their soul.

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 more Christ-like. St Paul, in his letter, urges the Ephesians not 'to live aimless lives like the pagans'.

The dreaded coronavirus has forced us overnight to change our longstanding way of doing things, Rather than treating it as a problem to be solved let us see it rather as an opportunity to let go of inconsequential things and focus on that which endures.