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You will remember after the Chilcot enquiry some years ago now, when the Government was on the receiving end of a lot of criticism not just in reference to the dubious reasons for engaging in war in the first place but particularly regarding the fall out afterwards which caused great suffering for the people. Goes to show how short-sighted worldly wisdom is.

The reading from Jeremiah makes the same point where it says: 'a curse on the man who relies on things of flesh'. In the Gospel Jesus says: '*alas for you when the world speaks well of you*'.

Well, when we play the world's game and kow-tow to those who can boost our ego, without questioning their ulterior motives, then we are, as the reading says, '*relying on things of flesh*'.

Jesus points a different way. He did not rely on 'things of flesh' because he knew how fickle people were. You remember after he fed the five thousand they wanted to make him King but he 'smelt a rat' and beat a hasty retreat into the hills. Shortly after that when He insisted that his followers 'eat his flesh and drink his blood', hoards deserted Him because this type of talk wasn't to their liking. Again, He says: 'Happy are you when people drive you out'. Some Sunday's ago we saw where He was driven out of his home village of Nazareth when the locals ganged up on Him. Again, He says: 'happy are you when people abuse you'. His trial before the Sanhedrin and Pilate was a catalogue of both physical, verbal, mental and emotional abuse. He also says: "happy are you when people denounce you as a criminal". Jesus was treated as a criminal when He was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on a Cross.

Jesus was a God pleaser, not a people pleaser. In John's Gospel He says: '*I always do what pleases Him*'. And again in the same Gospel he says: '*as for human approval, this means*

nothing to me'. Wanting the world 'to always speak well of us' is tempting but could cause us to compromise our catholic faith. In the 'synodal path' which we've recently embarked on, the Pope says we should always respectfully speak what's in our hearts on important matters and not hesitate. You and I will be more respected, in the long run, for being true to what we believe than always looking for others approval or too scared to 'stick our head above the parapet'. I know none of us likes to 'stick out like a sore thumb' even when defending our faith.

Jesus says: *'Happy are you when people hate you and drive you out, rejoice because your reward will be great in heaven'*. These words make little or no sense to people who always want to be well thought of and liked. We're not talking here about being a 'Johnny opposite' in everything.

Keeping close to Our Lord may not win us many friends in this world but the important thing is that we don't let Our Lord himself down. He is counting on our friendship, our co-operation, our support to further His Kingdom of love in this world. That may test our resolve but the Lord will not desert us. Standing by Him will *"give us a deep inner peace – a peace the world cannot give"*.