

Easter 6C

We see where the country is soon to have a new Prime Minister. MP's will sound out the prospective candidates before making up their minds. But all they have to go on is the candidate's words and they can often come cheap.

If you remember from last Sunday's gospel Jesus asks us to love one another but today He highlights our love for Him. He emphasises that it is only those who actually keep His words who can lay claim to loving Him. In this sense it's not reduced to a sort of woolly emotionalism divorced from reality. In another part of the gospel Jesus says that the keepers of His Word have their faith built on solid rock whereas those who fail to deliver on their words built it on shifting sands.

Now in order to interpret the word of Jesus in Scripture correctly we need the guidance of Holy Mother Church. This mothering role of the church is based on Mary our heavenly mother whom scripture says 'heard the word of God and kept it'. If Jesus asks us to keep His word then we need to be absolutely sure that what we're hearing is the word of truth. We see an example of this in the first reading today where the mother church in Jerusalem was given the final say on certain areas of disagreement among the early Christians. Jesus says: "anyone who hears you (i.e. the Church), hears me. In forming our conscience we are entitled to hear the authentic Word of God through Scripture and Tradition in order for us to make a correct response in love.

However, having heard the true message we can't just pick and choose which words of Christ and His Church we'll obey while side-stepping others. That's far from loving God. We saw in the first reading today where certain men from Judea were changing the word of God to suit their own agenda. In response Paul and Barnabas, guided by the Holy Spirit, had some stern words for them. We can easily be tempted to tamper with the Word of God and the teaching of Holy Mother

Church and whittle down its demands. On making up our minds on vital issues of conscience, people today stress the importance of making informed choices. However, we can easily make the wrong informed choice. Often the more knowledge we have on various ethical issues the more confused we can become. For instance it was only after Adam and Eve ate from the tree of Knowledge that they made the wrong choice which affected all their decedents. We can easily end up creating our own gospel. Jesus says today: “those who do not love me do not keep my words” and that means all of them without exception.

There is nothing as irritating as someone who rarely keeps his word. But God never baulks on His promises when his word finds a home in our hearts. By obeying His Word as transmitted through Scripture and Tradition we prove our love for Him because it's based on the Truth which comes from the mouth of God.