

Thought for the Day – Thursday 13th May 2021

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

The Humble Church

I have been reflecting this week on the incarnation, God coming to us, as a vulnerable, fragile human baby, who needed the love and care of his human parents, but also of those around him. The message of the shepherds, the gifts of the Magi, their fleeing to Egypt to escape from Herod, Jesus learning his trade from Joseph, his learning how farmers did their work, his dealing with the Syrophenician woman, and the many references in the gospels, to those who invited him to dinner and took care of his needs, show Jesus' willing to listen, learn and receive from others, as He also gave out the message of God's kingdom. His was a life and mission, marked by the humility, of giving service and receiving service.

It seems to me, that the church is called to imitate His humility. The church does have a Gospel to proclaim and enact, but it must not fall into the trap in thinking that it has all the answers, and that God is only at work through the church!

As we begin 10 days of focused prayer for the mission of the church to the world called *Thy Kingdom Come*, may we also be reminded that God is also at work in the world, and uses the world to resource and to speak to the church, where it needs to change. There are many ways in which the church, in my opinion need to change, one of them is in the area of inclusion around gender and sexuality. That those who identify as LGBTQI+ can feel genuinely included and part of the church. This for some, if not many, is a complex issue, and The Church of England has launched an initiative called *Living in Love and Faith*, to facilitate conversations and thinking on that, and we will be engaging with that soon at St James.

A humble church, which combines dedicated reading of the scriptures with listening to the voice of God in the world, will have a gospel that is relevant to share with the world, today. In that spirit of humility, may we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, for our friends, family, local community, nation and world.

Bible Reading: Mark 7:24-30