

Reflecting on the word of God

FOURTH TUESDAY IN LENT

First Reading

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

A stream came out from under the Temple threshold and flowed eastwards .... Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live .. Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails ...

Gospel reading

Jn 5:1-3, 5-16

At the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem ... were crowds of sick people – blind, lame, paralysed ... One man's illness had lasted thirty-eight years, and when Jesus saw him lying there ... he said, 'Do you want to be well again?'

It happened to be the Sabbath so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, 'You are not allowed to be carrying your mat.'

Jesus met him in the Temple and said, 'Now you are well again, be sure not to sin any more.'

It was because he did things like this on the Sabbath that the Jews began to persecute Jesus.

REFLECTION

Everyone who comes to confession in St Patrick's church kneels with the image of this man behind them in the stained glass window. Originally installed as an element of the Chapel for Baptism, I think it is fitting to retain the image for the celebration of Reconciliation and forgiveness. A penitent stands up straight, spiritually speaking, and, often enough, physically too as one experiences the gracious touch of God's love raising them up.

The aviation sector has been brought to ground, the finance sector is on its knees, sport and education are limping, our sick in every country and culture are in profound need of healing waters.

Jesus showed that the reign of God is present in the simplest of things – a tiny seed, a shepherd's crook, a sparrow's flight. God sustains everything.

Jesus lived the truth that he taught. He was rejected yet did not collapse in self-pity, he was put to a violent death but restrained his followers from violent reactions and, with his dying breath, offered forgiveness to his enemies.

In every thing, in every moment that we have to live through, in every success and every trial, nothing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus (Rm 8).

The waters of life flow over our present travail. Every experience of a human being can be lived as a salvific moment. The man who live afflicted for thirty eight years teaches us not to lose hope.