

Reflection for Tuesday, 5th Week of Lent

Number 21:4-5 John 8:21-30

In the first reading, God has led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. The Israelites left the slavery of Egypt in joy and set off into what they believed would be a bright future. But things didn't turn out as they imagined.

They grumbled about the hardship of desert life, and questioned God's care for them. To compound matters, poisonous snakes invaded their camp, and their bites caused many deaths among the people.

They interpreted this as a direct punishment for the sin of daring to speak against God and against his prophet.

God was not responsible for the snakes or for the deaths that occurred among the Israelites. God doesn't hurt his people. God cares for his people. In response to the prayer of Moses, God took pity on them and healed their wounds.

All spiritual healing begins when we face our mistakes; when we name what is hurting us. Healing starts when we face our sins, confront our guilt, and stop hiding the truth of how we have messed things up. It is often embarrassing to look at the truth of our lives. But it is also the only way that true healing can take place.

Even in difficult times like this, we have a set of directions to follow. Those directions are found in God's word which we encounter in the Bible, and in the lives of the Saints who put God's word into action in their own particular circumstances.

We are the new People of God, journeying in faith towards the promised land of eternal life. By our baptism we have been called out of slavery to sin into the freedom of the children of God. We are led, not by Moses, but by Jesus.

And we are bound to experience the desert of trial and difficulty. But just as God sustained the Israelites, so God sustains us through faith in Jesus. No matter how difficult life may be, for those who trust in God, and live a day at a time, the manna of his help falls every day.

May God hear the cry in our distress as we put our complete trust in his healing power and his love for us.

Fr Patrick