



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

9th June 2024

Tenth Sunday



Fr David Says....

The book of the Genesis is still a book which even today creates controversies amongst believers. For some the story of Adam and Eve should be taken literal. These are those people who believe that the Bible as a whole should be taken literal. They feel threatened to believe that if the story of creation was a myth, there is a possibility that other parts of the Bible would not be accurate too. Others on the other hand who have studied the formulation of the writing of the Bible and the different genres and contexts in which the Bible was written are more comfortable to see the Library of books, which we call the Bible, in their own context both socially and spiritually.

The story of the Genesis might be best understood as a myth explaining the origins of evil in the world. As human beings, we all have an existential struggle against evil. For some the story has a simple moral: God's creation was perfect until humans messed it up. But after Darwin, we can no longer claim our two primordial parents. Now we know that some 315,000 years ago, people in Africa evolved, developing abilities that distinguished them from other creatures. These skills included an extraordinary ability to adapt, learn collectively and use symbolic language. Some suggests that the first couple's happy fault described an evolutionary leap from innocent indifference to the ability to distinguish and choose between right and wrong. Humans became capable of self-giving love, incredible profess, mistakes and intentional evil. Once started there was no turning back. When they stepped into the precarious world of free choice, Eve and Adam (*Homo sapiens*) exited the garden of blissful ignorance forever. Their new consciousness changed everything. Our species could not but continue to adapt and change and to think critically. Knowledge of evolution shows that each advance makes life more complex and riskier. In the last 2,500 years, brave prophets have tried to awaken us to the responsibility that comes with our advances. They point out that by choosing to better our interactions with everything around us, we can create a better world. Mark's gospel today shows us how well that turns out.

Jesus's preaching and healing made him immensely popular with some and a threat to others. Some believed he wanted to unseat them; others jealous. Some deeply religious people feared that he was satanic. His own family worried that he was demented. Jesus's good news was too much, too new and different for many of his contemporaries. What unsettled both believers and doubters? His message of "Repent and believe the good news" he was not talking

about sin and remorse. That is easy enough!

The Greek word for repent, *metanoia* conveys Jesus's invitation to see everything with new eyes, to discover God's reigning and to join in. "Repent" invites us to venture into a new stage of evolution, to allow God to lead us into becoming more than we had ever imagined. Large crowds heard that and were electrified because Jesus taught with authority. He embodied the promise and effects of *metanoia*. Faith in this good news enabled disciples to begin to act like Jesus, going beyond old boundaries designed to keep them safe and pure and exclusive.

Mark's story about Jesus and his mother, sisters and brothers presents a parable in action to depict the radicality of *metanoia*. Jesus's family, those to whom he had belonged from birth, were looking for him because they could not comprehend what he was doing or how people were responding to him. When he heard that his family had arrived, his response was scandalous: "Who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother".

Jesus call to *metanoia* entailed a rejection of every type of exclusivity, be it family, ethnic, tradition, heritage, classism, sexism or nationalism. In Jesus's vision of God's reign, the measure of every action and relationship rests simply on how it fosters or impedes love and human thriving.

Today, many might agree with the family's opinion that Jesus had gone off the deep end. Although they probable would say it more politely with statements like, "That is just not practical, or "But in the real world...." The message remains the same.

Being closed to *metanoia*, to new insults, to a frightening, but grace-filled and ever growing relationship with God and others, impedes and denigrates the Holy Spirit. That stance remains unforgivable until a person decides to be open to the newness of grace.

Jesus's focus on *metanoia*'s good news suggests that the Trinity's motive for the incarnation had less to do with sin than with God's deep desire that we continue to evolve, becoming mothers, brothers and sisters with and in Christ.

As with Adam and Eve in the garden, our evolution and growth will undoubtedly include many falls, but participating in the emerging reign of God makes it worth the risk.

Thank you for taking time to read my reflection this week. God bless you.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Tenth Sunday Saturday 8th June	6:00pm Marjorie Phyllis Ingledew RIP (M Ingledew)
Sunday 9th June	09:15am Fr Louis Fitzmaurice (Foundation) 11:00am Thanksgiving for Noel Miranda (S Miranda)
Feria Monday 10th June	10:00am Martin Jones Quinn RIP (G Thompson)
Saint Barnabas Tuesday 11th June	10:00am Austin Barradell RIP
Feria Wednesday 12th June	10:00am Lauren Antao (Antao Family) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Anthony of Padua Thursday 13th June	10:00am Liana Levoir (M Hodder)
Feria Friday 14th June	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Eleventh Sunday Saturday 15th June	06:00pm Victoria Sturcke RIP (Bonnici Family) 09:15am Maria Tanner RIP (O'Mahony Family)
Sunday 16th June	11:00am People Of The Parish

Annual thank you letters from the Archdiocese of Southwark are being sent this weekend by email to gift aiders and regular donors. Please check your junk mail ! If we do not have an email address on record for you there will be a letter for you on the table in the lobby at the back of the church. If you do not receive a letter, or if you have any questions about your standing orders or gift aid please contact gift.aid@stjamespettswood.org.



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned cold meats
- Long Life Desserts
- Tinned Fruit
- Washing Up liquid
- Shaving Gel

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>