

GROWING OLD

Happy the people the Lord chooses as his own.

There is a saying that I and, I know, some of my contemporaries are quite familiar with. It states that growing old is not for the faint-hearted. It is very frustrating when I have finished with something and put it away in a safe place so that I know where to find it when I need it again but then I have to search the house because I cannot remember where that safe place is. There are other silly things I do like putting the sugar in the fridge rather than the cupboard. I prefer to put it down to absent-mindedness or foolishness rather than senility, but who knows? When I was young, everything was a challenge but something I could face. I told myself, "I can do this!" As I matured into middle-age I became more cautious and asked myself, "Can I do this?" Now that I am old, I find it hard to admit that I am no longer a young man and I ask myself "Is my mind and my body up to doing this and what will be the consequences if I fail?" I find it very hard to admit that there are things that I should no longer attempt to do. That decision to not do something that I was once able to do automatically is a very hard one.

A few days ago, the first reading was from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 1:26-31 where he tells us that it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning. It gave me cause to reflect on my own situation. Due to my visual impairment I decided to not drive and surrendered my licence and as I am no longer able to read fluently, I can no longer carry on as a minister of the word nor a minister of Holy communion. These decisions were very hard to make but I have come to realise that I have other God-given talents which I can use to serve. I have been told that I have a nice singing voice so I can use it to sing God's praises when I attend mass and can participate in the service as sincerely as I can. I can offer up the mass and my prayers for all those in need asking God to comfort and console them and, if it be his will, to heal them. I may be foolish and weak but if my prayers are sincere, He will listen. I have also learnt that I have a talent to express myself by writing down my thoughts and feelings in these reflections.

In the gospel that day, Jesus related the parable of the rich man who was going abroad and left some of his wealth in the charge of three of his servants Matt. 25:14-30. Two of the servants served their master well by doubling the amount of which he had left them in charge. The third servant did not please the master for he failed to put his talent to good use. He did nothing but bury it and gave it back to the master just as it was when he first took charge of it. It made me wonder how I will be Judged. The Lord has given me so much throughout my life. He has always been there for me and never let me down. Have I been faithful to him? Have I done enough?

*Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
Who desires not worthless things*

I pray that my weakness will make me strong and my foolishness will make me wise so that I will be able to climb that mountain with clean hands and a pure heart.