

Views from the Pews: Victorious living

We live in a world of stark contrasts and contradictions, winners and losers, with leaders of integrity, (the late Pope Francis modelled servant hood and reflected Phil:2:3-4) whilst others exercise a whimsical, flip flop style, or yet some, who sign ceasefire agreements, then sanction lethal drones and threaten with nuclear weapons. As earth's sojourners and Christ's witnesses in the world, we are called to navigate life amidst all the unpredictability and stormy seas and, whilst we are not world leaders, we can recognise sound leadership, regardless of political persuasion. I propose three characteristics worthy of credit for both leadership and our own lives: consistency, resolve and remaining true to self and our identity in Jesus.

Amongst our congregation, we often acknowledge significant wedding anniversaries. The longevity of these marriages has called for these characteristics – a resolve to co-operate and build a covenant relationship together, often dying to self rather than self-seeking; consistency in attitude and temperament towards each other (sometimes challenging) and remaining true to self, when God's design is for 'two to become one'.

In scripture we see these attributes, in the lives of Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul, Stephen (Christianity's first martyr), and many others. All the books of the bible, echoing God's plan for man's salvation, are our inspiration. The repetition of this theme of salvation, throughout, provides authenticity, confirming his word and promises because 'He is the same yesterday, today and forever more.' Ps 102:25-27 and Heb 13:8.

God honours faithfulness Ps 57:3,10 and even when we are faithless (Timothy 2:13) states, 'He remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself, or his own character.' In the fullness of time, God's plan culminated in Jesus setting his face like flint for the cross on Calvary, despite his earlier, heart wrenching prayer in Gethsemane. Matt 26:39; Mark 14:35:36; Luke 22:42-44. The resolve for Jesus to do the Father's will and fulfil this task was due to his constant abiding in the Father.

This surely must be our anchor, enabling us to navigate our conflicted, uncertain world, despite the whims, inconsistencies or calibre of world leaders (Ps 46). Eph1:13 tells us 'We have been given every spiritual gift under heaven.' We can avail ourselves of these gifts and live demonstrating that 'Everyone born of God overcomes the world.' 1 Jn:4. What a powerful witness to those around us, who do not have this anchor.

- Marie-Thérèse Borland