



A Reflection for Seventh Sunday of Easter Readings - Acts 16. 16-34 & John 17. 20-26

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, 'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.' She kept doing this for many days...

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, 'These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.' The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

A normal everyday situation of a random meeting in community as a slave-girl happens upon meeting with Paul and Silas. It is in this random encounter that Paul seeks for this girl to find true meaning in the connection that we all have in Christ. For in Jesus all things came into being and it is through Christ that they have meaning. In Christ we find true connection.

The fresco painted in about 1425 by Masaccio can be found in a small chapel in Florence. The image is of a continuous narrative in which Jesus is confronted by tax collectors as they question him about paying taxes. Jesus asks Peter to go to the sea and to cast a hook and to take the first fish for in its mouth he will find a coin of which the tax can be paid. At the left of the image we see Peter extracting the coin from the caught fish and then on the right hand side we can see Peter paying the required tax. Jesus and the disciples are painted wearing clothing that relates to ancient Israel but the tax collectors are painted wearing clothing that was current at the time of the painting.

In this image Masaccio depicts an occasion at which Jesus deals with the connection of relationships between faith, money and power.

We are connected one to another because of who we are and who God is.

Thank you for reading and keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Night Prayer from Cartmel Vicarage is live streamed from 9.00pm week nights on Facebook.
Keep connected by going to the Cartmel Priory Facebook page.*

Image - 'The Tribute Money' by Masaccio