

Lectionary readings: Genesis 22: 1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6: 12-23; Matthew 10: 40-42

For reflection and prayer

- **Genesis 22:** Abraham was probably influenced by the human sacrifice that was prevalent at the time and so believed that God wanted him to sacrifice his son. We, too, are influenced by current trends and can get sucked into the ways of the society in which we live. But Abraham's eyes were opened to a new way. Perhaps we, too, need a new vision, a new way of seeing, a new way of being followers of Jesus. We don't have to approach life or discipleship the way people have always done. Jesus is calling us to be radically different from the people around us, living in a different reality and being willing to open our eyes to new possibilities.
- **Psalm 13:** The Psalmist feels that God has turned his back on him. *'How long, my Beloved? Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear this pain in my soul, and live with sorrow all the day? How long will fear rule my life?'* (Psalms for Praying) I'm sure we have all felt like this at times. If we can find the courage to face our hurts, our anguish, our fears, our despair, we will slowly discover ourselves led into a new place and be able to pray like the Psalmist: *'As I trust in your steadfast Love, my heart will rejoice, for in You is freedom. I will sing to my Beloved who has answered my prayers a thousand fold. Come, O Beloved, make your home in my heart.'*
- **Romans 6:** v13 (The Message): *'Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time - remember, you've been*

raised from the dead - into God's way of doing things.' v13 (NLT): *'Give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.'* This is not an easy option; it is costly. But surely a faith which costs nothing is worth nothing. We can't live as we please if we are following Jesus. v19 (The Message): *'How much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness.'* v22 (The Message): *'You have discovered the delight of listening to God.'* (Have we?) *'A whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more of life on the way.'* This is what God wants to do for us - heal us and make us whole, give us a new way of living. But are we willing for the cost?

- **Matthew 10:** Jesus is here talking of hospitality - reaching out in love, accepting people in love. If we do this, we will be imitating Jesus. We are called to be Christ to people. 'What would Jesus do in this situation?' is quite a good question for us to ask ourselves throughout this week. The kind of love that Jesus showed was 'agape' love - unselfish love, looking for nothing in return, a communal feeling of connection, utterly selfless, valuing people - a radical new way of seeing people

A prayer

Jesus, disturbing stranger, you call and we follow. When we started out on our journey of discipleship, we had no idea what was involved. But we have found You to be a God of infinite love, a God who has shared our life and experienced rejection, suffering and death, so we know that You understand when we find the going tough. For calling us and disturbing us, for challenging us, surprising us, for inviting us to wholeness and a radical new way of being, we thank You, Lord. Amen