OTB29 2012 read only

One of my friends I has over many years accumulated a large collection of small ceramics during his holidays. None were particularly expensive but each represents my friend’s memories. So their value does not rest in any monetary calculation but in the on-going story of my friend’s life.

These pots would have far less significance if they had been bought as a job lot or donated without any real memory attached.

Mementoes are not the only things that carry a significance which draws on active participation. Sports trophies have no intrinsic value except to those who have won them as a result of their desire, discipline and dedication.

Likewise a university degree certificate represents the desire, discipline and dedication of an individual in making progress using their intellectual skills and aptitudes.

And the harvest holds so much more satisfaction for the gardener who has dug, sowed, weeded, pest-controlled and irrigated their crops.

While a wedding jubilee is a celebration of a significant period of married life with all that has been part of that shared story.

There is a great contrast with those who would try to take short cuts or demand something for nothing; instant gratification and guaranteed results regardless of any personal contribution.

Such is the way of the thief, the rapist and abuser, the quack doctor or fraudulent banker, politician or preacher. All of these make dishonest and abusive grabs for possession, status or power at the expense of others.

Little wonder then that Jesus rebuffs the request from James and John for guaranteed places in his kingdom. But we need to note that at the same time he offers another more honest, humble and demanding path to the kingdom.

Honest because of our personal involvement in walking this path involves. Humble, because it is a path that draws its inspiration from the servant king. And demanding because it does not protect us from the sadness, grief and suffering that weave their way through any truly human life.

The gospel scene therefore is a reminder and invitation to engage wholeheartedly and with open hearted trust in God’s love on such a path of life; trusting that such love will ultimately welcome us into the kingdom he invites us to share with all who surrender to such love.

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