

## 'BEING RESILIENT & BEING CENTRED IN GOD'

7 October 2018 - 27th Sunday Ordinary Time

### RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN IRAQ

Those who return to the towns of the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq certainly have **resilience**.

Such an incredible effort by the displaced people and clergy to return and begin again. **Enormous destruction, yet they bring hope and courage and resilience and faith to their new task.**

Today's homily links us to [several photos from Karemles and the story they tell.](#)

On one Saturday morning in September, Fr Thabet the parish priest of Karemles, came to Ankawa and drove me to his town.

As we walked around the town, I was challenged by the terrible destruction of buildings and facilities, **and the resilience and courage of the people** who had returned to rebuild their lives and homes and businesses and schools and shops and cemetery and public utilities.

Later someone from the larger town of Qaraqosh picked me up and drove me to his town nearby for a similar experience.

Later that evening I returned to Karemles.

After Sunday morning Mass, for breakfast, Fr Thabet and I were invited by a family that had rebuilt their home.

The Dad and remaining family were delighted to have his two sons visiting from overseas, one son from the USA and the other son a priest working in Italy.

The Dad had shown them what the family had done in the reconstruction, And now they shared stories and hospitality with me.

### BRISBANE CLERGY IN-SERVICE: SPEAKER ON RESILIENCE & HOPE

Last week the **Brisbane Catholic clergy had an in-service day.**

It was offered twice, and we could attend either on the Wednesday or Thursday.

Father Timothy Costello, a New Zealand Marist psychologist led us in our study.

In the last session he spoke about resilience and hope and gave examples of **resilient and hopeful** people.

I thought of the families who had returned to the towns of Nineveh Plains.

### RESILIENCE OF TWO NOBEL PEACE PRIZE RECIPIENTS

Since then, the media has highlighted another two incredible people.

Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad who have been awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.

**DENIS MUKWEGE** is a doctor who established a hospital in Eastern Congo.

At great personal risk, he has reached out as a healer to several thousand women, many who have been abused and raped in the ongoing war.

**NADIA MURAD** is a survivor.

She is one of the minority groups that were attacked by ISIS in its war of genocide in the Nineveh Plains of northern Iraq.

As a Yazidi woman, she was captured, enslaved and raped.

She is the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

As we read about their lives, we see a **determination, an inner resilience**.

Each in their own heroic way makes a difference.

You are invited to read [the statement by the Nobel Peace Committee](#).

### **RESILIENCE OF JESUS IN MARK CHAPTER 10.**

As we reflect on this Sunday's Gospel, we prepare by examining its context.

In verse 1, we hear that:

*'He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan.  
And crowds again gathered around him;  
and, as was his custom, he again taught them. '*

Later in the chapter, in verses 32-34 we hear that:

*"They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem,  
and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed,  
and those who followed were afraid.  
He took the twelve aside again  
and began to tell them what was to happen to him,  
saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem,  
and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes,  
and they will condemn him to death;  
then they will hand him over to the Gentiles;  
they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him;  
and after three days he will rise again."*

### **RESILIENCE AND EQUALITY IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK 10:2-16**

Today's Gospel takes place in region of Judea as Jesus makes his way eventually to Jerusalem, on the road to his suffering, death and resurrection.

Some Pharisees test Jesus.

We remember the context where men in that society could divorce wives.

Women's lives could be shattered, for example, by a husband wanting a new younger wife and so divorces his current wife.

**From his inner resilience, Jesus redirects the focus on to God**, and on God's intention for two becoming one. He says:

*'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female."  
"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'*

Later, in the house, privately the disciples continue the conversation with Jesus.  
Jesus states that either husband or wife can commit adultery.  
Positively - Equality in God's design and intention.  
Negatively – Equality in that husband and wife are both capable of adultery.

Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem.

**Jesus is focused and resilient.**

**He is busy yet has time for others.**

Time to be tested by the Pharisees,  
asked questions by the disciples,  
and now to respond as people bring little children to him.  
When we are busy and focused on something,  
do we still have time for others?

Mark tells us that:

*'People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them;  
and the disciples spoke sternly to them.*

*But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them,*

***"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them;  
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.***

***Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God  
as a little child will never enter it."***

*And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.'*

Jesus challenges us to respect the dignity and rights of children and women and men.  
Jesus focusses the attention of adults on the children, who had so little civil rights at the  
time.

Jesus *'took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.*

Next week the story continues as a man runs up to Jesus and asks the question

***"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"***

The disciples are perplexed by the response of Jesus,  
And Jesus addresses them as children,  
thereby bringing the focus back to today's passage on children.

After more discussion we come to a key text.

***"They were greatly astounded and said to one another,  
"Then who can be saved?"***

Jesus looked at them and said,

***"For mortals it is impossible, but not for God;  
for God all things are possible." '***

We note that all goodness leads us back to God, the centre of our existence.  
Marriage, respect for children, morality, the commandments,  
the way to eternal life.  
All good things lead us back to God.

## GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY

**Our resilience as people is founded in God's love for us and mercy to us.**

Whether it is in reconstructing one's life in the Nineveh Plains, or surviving the terror and trauma of abuse in war and conflict, we need to be there for each other, **supporting each other, as a family.**

On Friday two parish members participated in their traditional engagement ceremony of Ghana. Each speaker quoted an appropriate passage from Scripture in their speeches and stressed to the couple that they should turn to the Bible for answers in their relationship.

**In Christian marriage, a familiarity with the Bible is seen as essential.**

On Saturday they were ministers to each other in the marriage ceremony in St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral in Brisbane.

AS WE PREPARE FOR OUR WEEK AHEAD, WHAT BIBLICAL PASSAGES WOULD WE EACH SHARE ABOUT OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL RESILIENCE?

## PRAYER

Let us pray for the Nobel Peace recipients Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad.

Let us pray for the people of Sulawesi in Indonesia.

Let us pray for the people of the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq.

Let us pray for our sister community Blackall/Tambo in this time of drought.

Let us pray for our sister villages in South Sudan and their need for water.

Let us pray for those recently married.

Let us pray for our children.

Let us pray for the current Youth Synod in Rome and for the future of our youth.

Let us pray for inner resilience as we face the challenges around us.

Let us pray for ourselves that we always remember to be centred on God.

Let us now pray our parish prayer.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/100718.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook07102018>]



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