

God Can Anoint Anyone

Is. 45: 1, 4-6; 1 Thess. 1: 1-5b; Matt. 22: 15-21

It had been raining continuously for two days and the water level was rising. The man looked out of his living room window and watched the water flood the road and then his property and then his living room. When he was knee-deep in water, someone in a rowboat came along and said: 'The water's still rising. I'll take you somewhere where you can be warm and dry.' The man replied: 'Thanks, but I have faith in God. He'll save me.'

Later, when the man had gone up to his second floor bedroom, a motorboat passed by and the owner said: 'The water's still rising. Let me take you somewhere warm and dry. But the man replied: 'Thanks, but I have faith in God. He'll save me.'

Sometime later, the man was on the roof to avoid the rising water. Someone in a helicopter came by and said: 'You're running out of time. Come with me.' Again, the man said: 'Thanks, but I have faith in God. He'll save me.'

The floodwaters kept rising and the man was drowned. He met God at the pearly gates and asked Him why He had not rescued him since he had displayed such great faith. To which God replied: 'I sent three people to save you. What more did you want?'

Often, God chooses the most unlikely people to carry out his mission on earth; people we might not recognize as coming from God.

The First Reading is a continuation of the story of the Israelites in exile in Babylon. For years they had been praying for deliverance from their captors. Little did they know that God had anointed Cyrus, a Persian king, to lead the Israelites out of exile back to their homeland and to help rebuild the temple. Although Cyrus was not a Jew, in fact he was an enemy of the Israelites, God had chosen him to be a Messianic figure. The Israelites had been praying for deliverance but that deliverance came in an unexpected form.

God does this often. He chooses the unlikeliest of people to be our benefactors in our hour of need. We remember the story of the Good Samaritan who, when a Jew was beaten, robbed and left for dead, was the only person who stopped to help him. The Samaritan, who would have been despised by the Jew, took him to safety and paid the costs for nursing him back to good health.

And this is a message for us. God uses all types of people to accomplish His will. We cannot judge who will be our benefactor based on their outward appearance or their race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, station in life, or politics. In this time of pandemic, there have been many people such as: first responders, doctors, nurses, workers in senior's residences and nursing homes, bus and taxi drivers, grocery store workers and many others who have sacrificed and risked their lives to carry out essential services. Perhaps without them being aware of it, God chose them to accomplish His purposes in the world.

Cyrus and the Good Samaritan may not have been aware that they were being used by God for a noble purpose. And so it is with us. We may be unaware of how God is using us in our everyday lives. We may believe that we are not doing very much in the service of God and the people of this world. But we don't know how we fit into God's grand plan for the salvation of mankind. We may believe that our accomplishments are insignificant, but, in God's eyes, we may have done a great deal. We owe our lives and everything we do to God. Let us continue to live our lives according to the words of Jesus in the Gospel by 'giving to God the things that are God's'.