



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

I have had enough, Lord. Take my life.

Readings: 1 Kings 19: 4-8, Ps 33, Ephesians 4: 30-5.2, John 6: 41-51

Elijah said, 'I have had enough, Lord. Take my life.'

It was late at night in December 1981. I was called to the bedside of a lady in a nursing home in my parish. She was old and tired and in a lot of pain. (In the last thirty years care of the dying and the ministrations of pain relief has advanced beyond recognition, thank God.) But she was mortally ill and she had had enough. She wanted to die.

She was a believer and she was troubled. Was it a sin, she wanted to know, to want to die?

I heard her confession, absolved her and anointed her and prepared her for the journey. She asked for my advice – I was then a young buck light years from her dilemma. I had nothing of my own wisdom to offer her but the wisdom of the Church is boundless. I suggested that she, like Simeon of old in the Temple, praised God for the immense privilege and reassurance of being able to hold Christ in her arms in the Blessed

Sacrament and pray the Nunc Dimittis – ‘Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light to enlighten the gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.’

So we prayed it together.

When I returned in the morning it was to be told that, two hours after my departure, her prayer had been answered.

Life is not always so simple nor prayer so directly productive. I know that But that is the only ‘assisted dying’ I know, to help someone make a good and holy death, to place all things in the hands of the very source of our being and wait humbly on His mercy.

We are now trembling on the brink of a new legal definition of this last precious ministrations of ‘assisted dying’. What is to be placed before the House of Commons by Rob Marris M.P. in September, however, is not assisted dying but rather a licence to kill. It is a charter which will transform doctors and nurses from ministers of mercy to angels of death.

For half a century the forces of darkness have rejoiced at the transgression of the Hippocratic Oath in the mass slaughter of the unborn. Now, in the guise of compassionate libertarianism, they are ready to unleash their merciless tyranny on the old, the sick, the handicapped, the vulnerable and the depressed.

Let us not mince words with our demonic interlocutors, this legislation is the direct philosophical descendant of the Nazi tyranny our forefathers

defeated at such a cost. Their clinics and proposed 'therapies' and solutions are the next generations Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen. Knowingly or unknowingly the proponents of this creeping evil are glove puppets of the oldest enemy of Man.

How do I know this without ever having had the pleasure of their company or swapping idle chatter at North London dinner parties?

Because they see life not as a precious gift of God but as a humanly disposable commodity, a bag of matter to be cast aside at an emotionally or economically convenient moment. It is a world view utterly at odds with the Judeo-Christian understanding of Man made in the image of God, his very life a miraculous gift and its very purpose to give glory to God. The Lord alone gives and takes away and brings us home in His good time not ours.

There may be a thousand reasons why a dying man may want to live. There may be a thousand reasons why a living man may long to die. None of them, of themselves, may be morally wrong. St. Paul himself spoke of his desire to be gone and be with the Lord.

With the prospect of more beatings, imprisonment and beheading, who can blame him? But some of Paul's most important work remained to be done and he must struggle on.

In this morning's Old Testament reading, the giant of the prophets, pleads with God to be allowed to die. Elijah is in the pit of despair. His life has been spent on the run and in exile. His call to the nation has been ignored.

His great triumph on Mount Carmel has been trumped by a fire of persecution. His ministry appears to end in abject failure.

There is nothing physically wrong with him but he is deeply depressed and wants to die. 'I have had enough'. 'Game over'. 'Time to draw stumps'. God's answer to Elijah is, at first enigmatic. He takes him on a long journey to another mountaintop. There God will reveal Himself and commission His prophet to go and anoint the future both in Church and State before he is assumed into Heaven in an astonishing display of glory.

We do not know how, even in our deepest distress, we may yet serve God's glory and be best prepared for Heaven. Like the great servants of God we cannot know what work remains in store for us. What we cannot do, as servants of the Most High God whose very gift is the miracle of life itself, is to encourage self-slaughter. We may, like Elijah, often despair of the impenitent and godless society in which we are called to witness, but witness we must until we are called to glory.

We may, like St. Paul, face persecution or prison but we must write and speak the truth until the axe falls.

We cannot accept the rebranding of disposal plants as temples of human dignity. We cannot stand silent as the legislative apparatus is put in place for the abattoirs of the inconvenient. We cannot allow the enemies of Man to commit murder and call it mercy.

God alone is God.

Those in Parliament or in medicine who seek to usurp His sovereignty must understand their common, eternal and terrible end. Brothers and sisters, it is our duty, as Christians, to write to our representatives and remind them of the truth.

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