

Menu de Jour a la God!

1 Kings 3⁵⁻¹²; Psalm 119¹²⁹⁻¹³⁶; Romans 8^{26-end}; Matthew 13^{31-33,44-52}

All things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8²⁸)

We had a few days away this week - visiting the outlaws, who are in France. That meant eating out for most meals. In traditional French restaurants (nearer the bottom of the price spectrum) things are fairly easy: the *menu de jour* is just that: it is what the chef cooks for that day. It saves that tortuous moment of looking at a menu and either wanting everything or nothing from it, yet still having to make a selection.

The Old Testament and the Gospel are about choices - mostly human choices:

Solomon chooses **wisdom** and that pleases God. Certainly that was how his reign began, but it didn't last!

Jesus tells about choices that made a difference

- ✦ the man that found **treasure** and hid it again until he had bought the field
- ✦ the merchant who found the **greatest pearl** and sold his stock so that it could be his.
- ✦ the **fisherman** separating good fish from bad fish as a parable of God's judgement at the end of time.

All of this shows how faith informs our choices - faith that, like the **mustard seed** that begins so very small but grows into something substantial and strong, or like **yeast** that works its way into every aspect of life as it does into the dough that will become bread.

Yet, today in our readings, Paul soars above the other readings, when he talks about what faith means in life and beyond:

- ✦ **All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.** Wow! You don't need faith for this, neither is it a feeling. This is declared as a fact. It isn't most things, or the best things, or the things we like. ALL THINGS. Everything! Whatever happens to us, in the end we trust God that it is the best and right thing to happen to us.

- ✦ **If God is for us, who is against us?** The list is comprehensive - **Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** - and the answer is no-one: **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** That is why everything works for good - God is on our side! Whatever is happening to us or around us, at the very centre of who we are is this fact - GOD IS FOR US!

- ✦ **I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** I think that the list covers any eventuality. We are God's, we are in Christ: nothing is going to change that.

God doesn't offer us a menu from which we choose the bits you like and adjust the bits you want changed! This is the *plat de jour* and God delivers it to us!