

**Sermon Summary**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> after Pentecost**  
**9<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

- I recently had a discussion with one of our post-graduate students about whether reading texts like the gospels demanded a historical reading; what might it have meant in its context or not. He thought this was unnecessary, I begged to differ.
- To me , this morning's gospel is a case in point.
- If we read this through our own eyes, we will certainly get an understanding of Jesus' compassion.
- After all, we all implicitly feel that there is something wrong when a child predeceases a parent. And we all know that such circumstances demand a compassionate response.
- However, reading the gospel against the background of Jesus' time and that of the evangelist adds a further depth to this already important message.
- Widows faced alienation, and a life pushed to the margins of their society, particularly if there were no male children to look after them and their well-being..
- We see this in Ruth- where Ruth ( a daughter-in-law and widow herself ) overcomes the odds to provide a future for her mother-in-law (widowed and bereaved of her sons).
- However, we might choose to interpret the incident, John's account of Jesus on the Cross, Mary and the Beloved Disciple points to the same kind of circumstances. "The "handing over" implies a sense of protection and justice.
- This then becomes significant for us, who are called to be the body of Christ. Teresa of Avila prayed thus:

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
- We are called always to act, not just with compassion, but with Christ's sense of justice.

9 June 2013