

In a world where investment has a significant place in the economy of Nations as well as in the lives of individuals, we might use today's Gospel as an invitation to think about God's investment in us.

We only need to read the newspapers or watch the reports on Television to recognise how important investment is to the welfare of Nations, taking our State of Victoria as an example:

Without investment in infra-structure much of our transport and commerce would grind to a halt:

Without investment in industry there would be no employment:

Without investment in developing resources there would be no industry;

Without investment in education there would be no learning;

Without investment in science there would be no research;

Without investment in hospitals and other health services there would be no health care, - the list can go on, while at a more individual level, without investment in property, for many people there would be no income that will outlast their ability to earn a living.

Yet, none of this would be possible without the investment God has made in each one of us. Each one of us has been gifted with physical, intellectual and spiritual gifts, gifts of hand, mind and heart, gifts which have allowed some of us to develop manual skills which are the foundation of every form of industry. Others have been able to acquire intellectual skills from the mundane to the creative, in order to educate, to manage, to transform and create, and to uncover the very mysteries of creation.

All of us have been gifted with spiritual gifts, the gifts of the heart, which allow us to love and reach out to each other, to look beyond what is - to what can be, and thereby to transform a world where conflict, poverty, abuse and selfish exploitation are in danger of gaining the upper hand, at the expense of truth and goodness, peace and justice, beauty and freedom, and the many other gifts of a positive nature which we have from God..

That's why St. Paul challenges us in the second reading where he writes that all of creation is waiting for the revelation of the children of God, in the hope of being freed from the slavery to decadence, to enjoy the freedom and glory of us, God's children.

We've been given great gifts, gifts to benefit the whole of humanity, - to build a community where care for each other and for the environments of which we are part, prevail; - but if we don't use these gifts in the way God intended, we're like the seed in the Gospel today, where a large part fails to produce a harvest, because its priorities are found in the wrong place.

Can I suggest we look at the cost of investment for a moment. All investment costs pain. None of the investments I mentioned earlier will happen without the pain of taxation, of saving, of self-denial, of risk, just as no seed will bear fruit without first dying to itself. Think of what parents are spending in terms of care, time, and money to provide for their children, so they can grow up as mature, well-balanced and selfless adults.

That pain is reflected in a special way in God's gift to us of his Son, whose life and self-giving death is both model and courage for us to live in the same self-giving way. That's why we are here this Sunday morning, to receive once again the Bread of Life that strengthens and nurtures us through the Eucharist.

The prophet Isaiah said it well, when, in the first reading, he reminds us: "As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do."

Are we allowing God's investment in us to pay off?