

## **Donnybrook**

3 March 2022

### **Welcome**

Lent has begun. After the drama of Ash Wednesday, the readings put before us not simply the challenge of Lent but the challenge of life. In the phrase of the philosopher, we are condemned to be free – we have no choice but to choose. Not to choose is already a choice!

### **Topic**

Our readings speak directly to that experience.

### **Steps**

You will certainly have felt the stark contrasts in all three readings today. The reading from Deuteronomy comes at the close the book, when the reader is wondering how to respond to all the instruction. I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of the Lord your God. Life is not often to black and white, so binary in the current phrase. Still, we hope to make choices that will enhance life and be a source of blessing. The path is made clear: we are to love, we are to listen and we are to follow. The rounded spirituality of Deuteronomy is deeply wholesome, promoting integrity of life and action.

The image at the centre of the Psalm is graphic and appealing. We are to imagine a desert oasis. The one who trusts the Lord is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit in due season and whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper. The roots, on other words, have found the spring: can the same be true of myself?

The Gospel lifts the stark teaching, placing it directly into relationship with Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord. As in the other readings, discipleship is costly – in fact it costs not less than everything.

### **Conclusion**

Lent is our springtime, our time of new growth. It is a time of discipline but not for its own sake or for the sake of achievement. Instead, we are to flourish again.