

MONDAY

1 JUNE

Visit of the Blessed
Virgin Mary to
Elizabeth

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Psalm 113

Romans 12:9-16

Luke 1:39-49 [50-56]

TUESDAY

2 JUNE

2 Peter 3:11-15a.

17-end

Psalm 90:1-4. 10.

14. 16

Mark 12:13-17

WEDNESDAY

3 JUNE

2 Timothy 1:1-3. 6-12

Psalm 123

Mark 12:18-27

THURSDAY

4 JUNE

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Psalm 25:4-12

Mark 12:28-34

FRIDAY

5 JUNE

2 Timothy 3:10-end

Psalm 119:161-168

Mark 12:35-37

SATURDAY

6 JUNE

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Psalm 71:7-16

Mark 12:38-end

REFLECTION

A week which begins with the visitation is a good time to consider how the kingdom of God challenges or supports the status quo. Empowered by the Spirit, Elizabeth recognises just who Mary carries in her womb, while Mary glimpses for a moment the great reversal of the kingdom and celebrates a world turned upside down, the mighty fallen, the lowly exalted.

Mark 12 might be subtitled “the status quo fights back,” as representatives of the established order engage with Jesus, trying to determine exactly where he stands. Is he advocating revolution? No – he wants people to pay their taxes. Is he, then, an ally of the Sadducees? On the contrary, he tells them that they are quite wrong in their core assumptions. Surprisingly, they find common ground as a scribe asks Jesus’ view on the commandments. Both agree that love of God and neighbour outweighs all else and, in the face of that, silence falls. As Jesus celebrates the donation from the widow who, outstripping the ostentatious generosity of those who are wealthy, “out of her poverty... put in everything she had”, we are once again in the world of the Magnificat, where less can be more.

PRAYER

Challenging God,
the ways of your kingdom run counter to so much
that we take for granted in our world.
Give us the courage to choose your values,
and help us to love you with all our hearts
and our neighbours as ourselves,
reshaping our lives in accordance with
your commandments.



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CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART II – PREPARATIONS

John Witcombe continues his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

You are not permitted simply to turn up at the foot of Kilimanjaro and set off on your own. The regular routes all start in Tanzania, and the government guards this, one of its key assets, zealously, requiring all trekkers to register, join a licensed guiding company and pay a substantial tax. So the first hurdle to overcome is the sheer cost – this is not an expedition for the faint-hearted, on many fronts.

My next decision was how to choose a trekking company. The internet offers many options – but one criterion was that it should be a company that pays its porters a proper living wage. There are many stories of inadequately dressed porters carrying huge loads for wealthy tourists who don’t treat them – their hosts in a foreign country – with respect. Trekking companies affiliated to the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project contract to pay and treat porters appropriately, so this was a good place to start.

Through all of this I was seeking a sense of the Spirit’s confirmation that I was doing the right thing. It wasn’t just what I did, but the way I did it, that was important. If I was to ask God’s blessing on this crazy activity I had to be doing it in the way God would choose. It all added to the expense, but making ethical decisions mattered.

With the deposit paid, my next task was to choose and buy suitable equipment. Conditions on Kilimanjaro vary from the heat and damp of tropical rainforest, to sub-zero alpine temperatures on the summit. I was heading to Tanzania via Burundi and Rwanda and I needed to take clerical robes and gifts for my hosts alongside my trekking gear – all within the twenty-three-kilogramme weight limit! In the end I could only manage by walking into the airport with my pockets bulging with all the things that wouldn’t fit into the bag...

Travelling light on this pilgrimage? Not really, I’m afraid. I was going to need to shed some baggage.

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
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and
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Pentecost

Monday 1 June to
Saturday 6 June
2020

WEEK