



A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEKEND

9th June, 2023

"... because you say so, I will ... "

Luke 5:5

I have a dim memory from long ago of a war-film I must have watched. A submarine was on fire and sinking; the only hope for the crew was to get into a sealed section of the hull and close the waterproof door, -but the fire had made the big metal door-locking wheel too hot to touch. Several crew members tried to turn it but couldn't. Then one rating shouted to his senior officer, "*Order me to do it, sir! Order me to do it!*" The imperative to obey an officer's order was so great in the man's mind that he bore the pain to carry out the order, and thus he saved his comrades.

Within us all, certainly within me, is one who avoids the unpleasant task or resents being 'presumed upon'. Alongside that may be resentment and frustration at life's 'ups and downs', a sense of injustice, and lurking ahead could be bitterness, anger, regret, envy and a whole hoard of negative gremlins threatening to make us unpleasant for those around us and for ourselves!

Going back to the story of the brave submariner, I wonder, -supposing my Father-God specifically 'ordered' me to do something; wouldn't I be uplifted to be entrusted with it by the Lord I'm devoted to? Wouldn't I walk tall like a little boy given a special job by his Dad? Or supposing I heard my Master's voice saying, "*Would you bear this for me for the time being? I need you to do it.*" Surely it would improve my attitude to the task, the pain, or any sense of being 'used'. I expect we've all said to someone at some stage -perhaps a child- "I wish I could bear the pain for you." or "I would do that for you if I could."

George Herbert's hymn "*Teach me my God and King in all things Thee to see*" was originally a poem called 'The Elixir', its basic message is that the lowest task or worst drudgery can be transformed with the motive of doing it for our Lord. In an age when alchemy was fashionable (the 'philosopher's stone' that was supposed to turn all to gold), Herbert was saying that the attitude of doing something "for Thy sake" was the mind-set that "turneth all to gold"

In Luke 5, poor old Peter had fished all night fruitlessly (fishlessly?!), then cleaned the nets, - and then rowed his boat out for a floating platform. (How long did Jesus teach for?!). Peter must have been falling asleep and longing to go home, but then Jesus suggested another fishing trip! OK, Peter puts up a mild protest, but then comes the key response, "... because you say so, I will ... "

As St. Ignatius Loyola has it... "*... To labour and not ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will.*" Or, for a more 'fun' version of the 'for Thy sake' message, try Stanley Holloway's monologue, "*Sam, Sam, pick oop tha musket!*" The attitudes of all those involved make the differences!