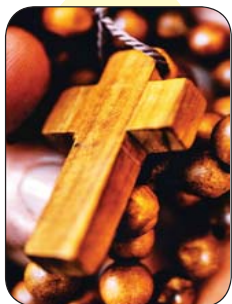


Oratia's Bubble Reflections 30 August 2020



'Prayer for Today'

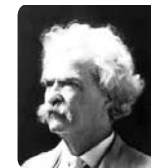
Eternal and everliving God, our beginning and our end,
you give us strength in the face of suffering and death.
Set our minds on divine, not worldly things.
Give us courage to take up our cross and follow you,
Help us to trust and live in the power of the resurrection of Jesus.
Through Jesus Christ our Liberator, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Christchurch

As you read this prayer - hold up the bereaved and all who still suffer from the dreadful mosque massacre

The Media and us.

"If you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you do read the newspaper, you're misinformed" - Mark Twain



There's nothing new in media mistrust. And in our context today, for newspaper, add the Web, TV & Radio. Some say we are not being well served, and not only by the deliberate fake news, but by the media generally at this time of crisis..

Please share your thoughts . . . Email or phone brookerfamily@xtra.co.nz 09 813 1528

'Supermarket Theology'

This is the Whimsical title of Eddie Askew's Reflection and Prayer from the Matthew reading that you will find over the page. The words, '*Baked Beans*' even get a mention in his prayer.

The latest 'Consumer' has done some probing into the habits of our two big NZ supermarket empires. With butchers and greengrocers closed during the Covid-19 Lock-down, Woolworths and Foodstuffs and their offshoots have scooped the groceries and alcohol market.

Consumer reports that Countdown's sales alone increased 13.7% to \$1,700,000,000 - to the joy of its Aussie owner. Noted also is that Foodstuffs own Liquorland and other retailers - and the big wholesalers of both supply independent dairies too. Little wonder our PM has commented 'she wouldn't be surprised' if the supermarket sector was on the Commerce Commission radar.

However- let us make our own discoveries

Justice and the care of God's beautiful world are always the concern of Christ's followers. This writer is a notoriously nosy individual, so he decided to poke around Pak'n Save & Countdown shelves on a shopping expedition the day before lock-down. No plastic shopping bags supplied for his goodies.

Great - good for the environment too. Cost reduced to the firm - profit instead by a selling paper bag and/or a reusable fabric one, some are logo branded. Free advertising for the firm too.

Their TV advertising exhorts us to 'Buy New Zealand made!' But in Countdown, I noticed that their house brand Baked Beans were made in Italy - not Hastings, New Zealand. At Pak 'n Save, their 'Pam' canned peaches and fruit salad all come from South Africa. Lower labour costs, so cheaper to buy? These are but two examples - there must be many more.

Looking for Griffin's Snax water biscuits, I noticed an imported brand on special. Less salty? Bought, but I opened the pack to find it full of little plastic bags containing just 2 crackers - obviously for kid's lunch boxes - not good for the environment.

Some practices may border on the criminal in my opinion. New Zealand bans palm oil from Indonesia where de-forestation destroys habitat for endangered wildlife. Both chains have house brand biscuits made in Indonesia, or China, or Fiji or wherever palm oil comes from the cheapest source, thus evading New Zealand law.

There's probably another justice issue within NZ too. Countdown's TV presentations show happy farmers growing perfect cabbages etc. For growers and orchardists though, margins have been static for a decade while the Big 2 conglomerates are 'creaming it'?

What could we do? Tell them we are unhappy? Contact the Commerce Commission? Petition whichever parties rule after the election for a change for good. It's up to us, isn't it?



May the tenderness of grace and the liveliness of hope confirm us in community-mindedness in respect for those disrespected and in choosing justice and well-being for all Spirit of Communion

Matthew 16:24-28

IT was painted on the blank wall outside a supermarket, facing the car park. "You are only as rich as the things you can do without." Very true, I thought. I pictured the painter as a frustrated shopper, worried by more price increases and intent on cutting down the family's cost of living. First, the protest; then burn her car; then retire to the simple life on a mountain top. Very good — here was someone grasping for a real assessment of the things which so much of the world values. But then I came to the point of realising that, like so many catchy slogans, it was only a half truth, pointing up the superficiality of our thoughts, and proving the poverty of our reliance on material things. The slogan writer was protesting about materialism, but apparently able to conceive of poverty and riches only in the material terms he or she was rebelling against.

My fingers itched to put up another daub alongside: "You are only as rich as the things you possess," and to work this out, not in the material context of the first slogan but in the Christian's experience of the riches of Christ who "... for your sake became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). What are those riches? "Christ in you, the hope of a glory to come" (Col. 1:27).

Our true riches lie, not in the acceptance or rejection of the material as though nothing else existed, but in our ready acceptance of the spiritual, and in the possession of a continuing experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Rich, not in the ephemera of the supermarket, but in those things "which the world cannot give" — love, joy and peace.

A Supermarket Theology *from Eddie Askew*

Lord, I'm rich.
I'm rich because you love me, and I know it.
Rich beyond anything the world can give.
Rich because the world can't take it away.
It's there, your love, and nothing I do will change it.
I can reject it, forget it,
but it's still there.
I only have to reach out and it's mine.

I'm rich because of faith.
Because, knowing your love, I can believe the rest.
When I'm down, things get unreal.
Disconnected.

It's so easy to question,
to hang my insecurity on to you.
To blame you for my own weakness,
to say there's something wrong with the system
when I know it's me.
And then your love takes over again,
and the joy bursts out.
Like living grass through dead concrete.

I'm rich because of hope.
Because your love gives me a new perspective on life.
I may get tired and disappointed.

Things go wrong,
and I wonder what it's all about.
Then I reach out and feel that love again.
And I know that beyond the disappointment,
beyond the cares, you are there.

Always.
And my hope is real, it can't be taken away.
I may give it up, but it can't be taken away.

Yes, Lord, I'm rich,
and it has nothing to do with supermarkets.
It's not baked beans,
or this week's special offer, it's you.

You, Lord, your love, and joy, and peace.

