

## Thought for the Day

*Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.*

*For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>*

*Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)*

*Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.*

Thursday 26th March

Exodus 4.27-6.1

Moses and Aaron are in negotiations with Pharaoh for the release of the Israelite labour force. They ask for permission to travel into the wilderness and worship their God. Pharaoh refuses and moreover doubles their workload to discourage such cheek as to ask for a holiday. The consequences are disastrous as the task is impossible, and the people turn on Moses and Aaron for making their lives even more difficult.

Pharaoh is operating out of fear, control and oppression. There are too many of them... make them work harder, they are lazy...

Moses was asking for freedom and trust. Let my people go... It was a direct clash of ideology. Moses models some very honest prayer as he cries out to God 'Why did you ever send me?...You have done nothing at all to deliver your people'.

The story goes on and of course it took quite some time and many more troubles before Moses eventually managed to lead the people out of Egypt.

How hard it is when our prayers seem unanswered, as if God has forgotten us or dropped off to sleep. The Psalmist even suggests this – 'Awake O Lord! Why do you sleep?' (Ps 44.23)

When I pray a perfectly good prayer asking for something clearly good and valid, why does God not make it happen at once? It's a dilemma that many individuals in Scripture wrestled with. There is no simple answer to this, of course. But we know from experience that often we are called to patience, to waiting in trust and hope, not seeing the answer or outcome but leaving it in God's hands. Perhaps one day we will see it. Perhaps not. But we must still pray, and we can follow Moses' example of honest prayer, telling it like it is to God, with all the strength of our feelings, whether anger or bitter or joyful or sad. None of it will be a surprise to God, and when we have negative emotions, the best place to take them is to God.

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort,  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*