

## REFLECTION – MEMORIAL OF SAINT DAMASUS

**B**efore anything else, I think that what is amazing here is that Jesus, the Word made flesh, to illustrate the point he is going to make is quoting a popular children's chant. In effect, this ditty would be the kind of song like, "ring-a-ring of roses", or "Oranges and Lemons say the bells of Saint Clements", that probably involves some little actions on the part of the children singing it, just like on Sesame Street, or with the Wiggles, or Playschool. Maybe Jesus sang it as he was growing up in Nazareth as he played with the other local kids in the streets. "We played for you, but you did not dance..." Jesus was not unattuned to the folk culture of his time.

**G**od made an entire universe for us. His signature is all over it. Everywhere we look we can see the Mind of God: The coding of DNA; the movement of the stars; the moon and the tides that form the weather patterns; the proximity of the sun, in such a perfect distance as to allow life on earth, and so on. The evidence for God is everywhere, and like that evidence, the signs for what to do about it are also everywhere. Written on the human heart, there is the natural law. Written into the mind, there is the appreciation of the First Cause of all things — God — and from there, wisdom, the application of intelligence and reason to experience and science. Then, through revelation, we know of the election of Israel as the People of God, and in that knowledge we begin to detect that Mind which made all things, who speaks to Israel through the Prophets, reminding them to turn back to the Lord, and telling the people of the signs by which they will recognise the Christ, the Saviour of Israel, who will save them from their false choices and lead them back to God. BUT... when it comes to it... THEY WILL NOT DANCE = They will not obey God. THEY WILL NOT MOURN = they will not with contrition repent from their sins and sinful behaviours. They refuse to open their eyes to see who Jesus really is. Their refusal to obey, to repent, to use their wisdom, is perverse and ridiculous, hence the mocking note of the children's song.

**W**e, who bear the witness of the resurrection, who are configured to Christ through our baptism, who are given the entire resources of the Church, her magisterium, her teachings, her Sacraments, the Communion of Saints, we must not think ourselves so superior to those Jews in today's Gospel who couldn't or wouldn't recognise Jesus. Every time *we* fall into sin, each time *we* fail to see God in the here and now, each time *we* refuse to hear wisdom speaking to us, we are like that generation, who despite the signs, could not see, hear or understand who Jesus is.

**G**od speaking through Isaiah, however, promises that if we repent, if we open our eyes, if we hearken unto wisdom, we will know him, we will recognise the Word, and he will recognise us. Then it is that our peace will be like a river: a river that makes the land fertile and bring forth life; and our righteousness as the waves of the sea: an ocean of love rippling out to all around us over and over again in never-ending waves of goodness, and that, therefore, our posterity, our legacy, will be eternally fruitful. We will be ready, then for the coming of the Messiah and his presence among us.