

Homily 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 2024

As parents and grandparents, we are all used to a barrage of questioning from our offspring. It's almost constant and answers only generate further questions in the mind of the child. Questions have an important function in stretching the conversation and ensuring understanding. Jesus, several times in John's Gospel, asks searching questions. In today's Gospel, having identified potential disciples, Jesus asks them, "What do you want?" John the Baptist has just described Jesus as "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." so Jesus' question, his first words in John's Gospel, is both challenging and encourages Andrew and another anonymous other disciple to really focus on why they might follow Jesus, "What do you want?"

I often use 'Centring Prayer'. I believe it is an Ignatian form of communicating with God. Instead of taking a whole passage from Scripture 'Centring Prayer' encourages us to choose one word or a single Gospel phrase to quietly reflect on whilst in communication with God (silently, listening and if necessary, talking). I did this exercise recently, in preparation for this homily, and it was one of the most demanding questions I have ever posed myself or better that Jesus had ever posed me. Jesus was asking me what I really wanted as one of his disciples. As I prayed, I felt Jesus was continually reinforcing certain thoughts in my mind and what I really wanted was: to be like you Jesus; to serve others; to be ever available to those most in need; to be humble, compassionate and understanding, merciful and forgiving; to remove heavy burdens from others' shoulders and to love as you love. The overarching conviction which emerged was that all this was only possible if I gave up my own selfish agenda, accepted that I could do nothing without God's love and if I abandoned my life completely to the will of Jesus.

Why don't you, like Samuel on the advice of Eli, in The First Reading of today's Sacred Liturgy, return to the peace and quiet of your own inner room and wait for God to speak to you in the gentle breeze of silence. A starting point may well be Jesus' first words to the first disciples in John's Gospel, "What do you want?" Andrew's life, and indeed the life of The Old Testament prophet Samuel, were turned upside down when in prayer they discovered that they wanted, above all else, to embrace a life of faith in a personal relationship with God