

26th January 2020 (3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Word of God Sunday – Australia Day, Year A)

Isaiah 8:23-9:3; Psalm 26(27):1,4,13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17; Matthew 4:12-23.

'Jesus went around teaching the Good News of the kingdom.'

Today Pope Francis invites us to celebrate the Word of God. God speaks to us; God wants to enter into a deep relationship with us. This is the fundamental meaning of who we are; out of his great love, God creates us so that he can share his being with us, here on earth and later in all its fullness.

God speaks to us in ways that we can understand him. Creation itself is one of the ways God speaks; it reminds us of the creator and speaks to us of his greatness, his care and his love for us. God speaks to us through events that happen around us and through people in our life. Jesus is the word of God sent to live with us and show us God's face. Today we are invited to remember and celebrate, in a special way, the written word of God in scripture. The Old Testament is the experience of the old People of God and their relationship with God, the New Testament is the experience of the new People of God, the Church. Every time the Church comes together, the Church invites us to dive into God's word in scripture to deepen our relationship with God.

In today's gospel passage we see Jesus, the word of God, who sets out to start preaching, teaching the good news of God's reign on earth. Creation exists in God and has its being through God; our whole life is lived within God's reign (kingdom of heaven). Jesus is the fulness of this 'being in God.' In Jesus, God himself takes on creation and lives in our midst as a human person. He is the 'light' that can best talk to us about this good news of God's love.

God's loving invitation requires of us a response. God invites us to engage in a loving relationship with him. In the gospel reading we see Jesus who calls his first four disciples to follow him. They immediately leave their boats, their business and their father to follow Jesus. The gospel expresses and immediacy in the response of the first disciples. Jesus calls and they follow! Jesus still calls, he calls each of us to follow him and to dedicate our life to the kingdom of God / kingdom of heaven. We too need to give witness to the good news of the kingdom.

The disciples left their life behind to become full-time partners of Jesus. What did they understand? What made them leave everything behind? Rabbis always had their followers with them, we read about John the Baptist who had his own group of disciples. Yet I would presume that the followers would have first got to know the rabbi before they started following him. The gospel story suggests a blind trust in Jesus; he calls, they follow!

As disciples and followers of Christ we too are invited to leave behind the life we know and follow Jesus. We are not expected to physically walk away from our work and our family; that would bring about total chaos and not God's kingdom! We are invited to look at family life and our work with a new light, from a new perspective. Jesus invites us to place himself first and to order all our life and interests in relationship to the kingdom of God. How do I love my family and friends from a perspective of the good news? What does Jesus teach us about love of others? How do I live the good news of the kingdom at work? What values does the kingdom invite me to bring among those I work with? How do I respect and honour creation around me in a way that acknowledges the presence of God? God invites me to be a co-creator; how do I help to renew God's creation?

When I choose, like Peter, Andrew, James and John, to follow the gospel, then I can look at myself, my relationships, creation and all of life in a new way. There was a continuity in the disciples' life; from fishers of fish they became fishers of humanity! I too need to continue living my own life but with a renewed perspective, looking at life with the light of the good news.

Go gently!

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