



Second Week in Ordinary Time: 17th and 18th January 2021

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Come and See”.

One of the areas of Church life that has received a lot of attention in recent years is “Evangelization” meaning, in broad terms, reaching out beyond the Church with the “good news” that Jesus came to bring. In my earlier years as a Priest “Catechesis” was a main focus of Church activity, again, in broad terms, meaning education and formation in Faith, for those already part of the Church. The reality is that it is not so easy to separate the two: many people already in the community of the Church still need Evangelizing i.e. they haven’t really got to grips with the central “message of the good news of Jesus Christ”.

When I started to think about this Sunday’s readings where the Gospel follows on the Baptism of Our Lord, and focusses on His call to the first disciples at the beginning of His Mission, my mind turned to Evangelization. What is it that happens to make some people “disposed” to hear God’s call to Faith and others not? In the Gospel for the second Sunday, you can see the disciples of John the Baptist were “disposed” to respond positively to the direction they received from John to go to Jesus and to enquire about His teaching, which resulted in His invitation “Come and See”. And, the other week when we celebrated the Epiphany, we found the Magi who were searching, searching for the Messiah, the one who would bring ultimate meaning to their lives, were clearly open to who Jesus could be for them.

It is said, and I am sure rightly, that everyone seeks something deeper than merely material things because these never really “satisfy” our deepest yearning for the “spiritual”. The first disciples were already steeped in the O.T Scriptures and in the longing for the Messiah, so given the right “steer” from a person they trusted and admired, John the Baptist, they were ready.

I am sure the same is true today: people who are “disposed” to learn about the teaching of the Church will respond to someone like Pope Francis. Others, however, though leading good lives, are not open to the truth of the Gospel. Sometimes this can be in these days, the terrible impact of “abuse” in the Church, not least the outcome of the enquiry recently into the Children’s Home in the West of Ireland. Sad happenings like this, can result in many people never wanting to hear about the Church again! They don’t see the truth of the Church’s teaching or the many good things happening through Church activities anymore.

We Church members are aware that it is made up of human beings and at many times in the history of the Church we have failed to live up to our calling. We reflect the society in which we live. We are conscious that there is a need of constant repentance and reform. To strive for the goal of being more like Christ is the aim of many initiatives

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such as the Sunday of the Word of God which we celebrate next week. There are many ways in which we are blind to our own shortcomings, though we couldn't ever imagine ourselves being involved in abuse, or genocide and persecution such as that happening in China for Uighur Muslims today. The way to respond to "Come and See" what Jesus offers a true and satisfying goal of life is to focus on the person of Jesus, who lived what He taught, suffered, died, and rose to Glory.

To "dispose" ourselves for this ongoing Catechesis and growth in Faith requires prayer and reflection as well as listening to the Gospel once more. The teaching coming from the First Book of Samuel on the Second Sunday of the Year is about the disposition of the young Samuel, his being in prayer before the altar and his readiness to say "speak Lord your servant is listening" when God spoke to Him.

All those who turn away from total commitment to material things to listen to God speak will find His voice: maybe initially it will be in beautiful music or art as a friend of mine said, or in the life and practice of the family as was my case. Ultimately, to grow and mature as Christians, we need to set aside time to listen to His Word in Scripture and the Teaching of the Church, and to experience Her worship and love of the Gospel.

The Sunday of the Word of God is a good place to start, next Sunday.

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