

Homily. 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. A. 23/24 September 2023.

There are lines we've read that stick around, that glue our heads and hearts together. One that's stuck with me was written by St. Augustine some 1600 years ago; You have made us for yourself O Lord, and our hearts will ever restless be until at last they come to rest in thee.

In its own way this saying expresses what Isaiah proclaimed; Seek the Lord while he is still to be found; call to him while he is still near, for though God's thoughts and ways are often beyond ours, yet God always remains rich in forgiving mercy. Even the Psalm response echoes this message; The Lord is kind and full of compassion, near to all who call.

To one degree or other none of us are totally at ease. In this sense then, human beings are dis-eased, ever searching for meaning, purpose and that point of stillness, fulfilment and rest. Out of our restlessness of spirit great achievements and wonderful innovations emerge, but also terrible ills, wrecking others and bringing much damage upon this world of ours.

So, there is work for us to do, work in the vineyard of God where all of us are needed and no one is ever surplus to requirements. God engages us in this creative and saving work, giving us a covenant promise that God will be with us and that our needs will be met, fairly and generously. This isn't a competition by the way, a time for crowing about what we've done compared to others. Nor is it a chance for us to be envious of God's generosity either, for truthfully all of us are recipients of God's unmerited kindness, mercy and love. This is the meaning in the parable.

St. Paul said that his restlessness could only come to rest in Christ. At that time he also knew that by staying alive and working in the field of the world and of the Church he could benefit others. He told us all of this our 2nd reading, ending his words by encouraging us to avoid anything in our daily lives that wasn't worthy of the gospel of Christ.

In the Spirit of our merciful, generous Lord, serving and kindly helping those we meet is very much our work for God which honours the gospel. It's our way to wisely and unselfishly use our restlessness for others, not allowing it to turn inwards into a disease that warps us and harms them. Tell me how otherwise can we practice the Opening Prayer which said that God founded all of the commands upon love of God and of our neighbour, the living of which leads us to eternal life? How else can we ever cease searching and come to rest our hearts at last in God alone?