

Homily – 4th Sunday of the Year 31st January 2021

“I don’t like being interrupted”. That’s the response we sometimes hear in life.... what are interruptions?

Perhaps something that disturbs our train of thought or prevents us from doing our work. Many people may see the pandemic as a gross interruption into their way of life. Wrecking plans, work and the rhythm of being active in the world.

War, famine, divorce, unemployment, disease, flood and fire all have the effect of disturbing our way of life. The natural human response is to look for a path of restoration: to get us out of the chaos, the mess.

In the Gospel today Jesus is interrupted by a man possessed by an unclean by an unclean Spirit while he is teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. Jesus does not hesitate to stop and respond to the needs of the poor man; whom the scribes and the crowd did appear to be ignoring.

Jesus shows us that no work or teaching of his is more important than helping the needs of the poor, the marginalised. He does, in fact, give a lead to the future of the Church, that it is there to respond to need No matter what that need may be. As it says in the beatitudes, ‘Blessed are the merciful, they shall have mercy shown them’.

On many occasions Jesus is suddenly interrupted by people on the roadside, The Roman Centurion, Simon Peter’s mother in-law, Bartimaeus, Legion, the Canaanite woman, etc.

However, Jesus never sees them as an inconvenience or pain in the neck, he always sees them as a moment of grace, an opportunity to show the grace of God at work.

St Paul also teaches that the apostolic life of a disciple of Jesus is best suited to those who have consecrated to those who are constantly willing to deal with whatever comes into their midst. I know as a priest; it is my vocation to be ready at any given time to respond to the needs of my parishioners. Many kind people start their request by prefixing it with the phrase, “I am sorry to interrupt you Father, I know you are busy, but, but – A priest should never let his occupation or activity be a barrier to his people. Just as a parent should never let their work be a barrier to their children. The Church is here to be a Servant of God; we are here to serve. The word ‘Vicar’ means ‘Servant’ of Christ. That is why Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the last supper.

It is an arrogant person who dictates that they are too important to be interrupted.

Life is often a struggle to be heard and only when we, like the possessed man, in desperation, that we cry out; is our voice heard – Jesus hears the cry of the broken hearted.

As its said in T.S. Elliot.

“From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit, proceeds, unless restored by the restored by the refining fire. Where you must move in measure like a dancer”.

God Bless you All

Fr Jeremy Bath