

Reflection Monday of 4th Week of Easter

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God. (Ps 41) This yearning for God is what St Augustine called a restlessness that only God can satisfy. There is no doubt that we have many yearnings, some more prominent than others. However, we are not always clear about what the objective of our yearnings really are. A prominent yearning may concern the type of career we wish to follow; it may be a hobby or interest that stays with us the whole of our lives. It may even be to fulfil what the Americans call a *bucket list*? These are sincere and, in some cases, dominant yearnings but, beneath all of these, our souls have an overriding yearning that supersedes all others and yet is linked to them in some way - our yearning for God. Wherever the apostles went they encountered people who yearned for God and in recognising their yearning became followers of Christ. The apostle came to realise that this yearning was present in everyone's lives. John of the Cross said: *Yearning: It needs to hurt in order to be worthy of the word. Otherwise it is just wanting!*

Pope Francis sees this yearning in the 4th Beatitude: *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."* Jesus speaks not only of hungering and thirsting for personal and social justice, but also points to a deeper yearning for righteousness in the eyes of God as expressed in Ps 63, *"O God, you are my God, for you I long; my heart thirsts for you."* This desire lies within every human heart and finds its fulfilment in Christ, who through the paschal mystery has reconciled us to the Father and calls us to share with everyone the Good News of our justification. By promoting justice, we will find true satisfaction, because our thirsting for righteousness will be quenched by the love God pours out upon his children.

You can experience this yearning for guidance in John Henry Newman's Poem:

1. Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home, Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.
2. I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path, but now Lead Thou me on;
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.
3. So long Thy pow'r has blest me, sure it still Wilt lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

St Augustine likens yearning to desire. He says that our prayers stem from desire - and if our desire is without ceasing, then our prayer will also be without ceasing. Our constant longing (*yearning*) for God means that our prayer, too, is constant.

Final thoughts:

- Q: Why did the dyslexic agnostic with insomnia stay up all night?
A: She was wondering if there really is a **dog!!**
- Would a fly without wings be called a **walk???**