

Homily 3rd Sunday Year B 2021 – Word of God Sunday

Who is this Jesus, the Christ, the one we call the Word of God? Philip Cunningham studied this question and offers this understanding: *Jesus grew up in the midst of family, friends and fellow villagers. Like his father, he became a woodworker, but there were also animals to care for, most likely fields to cultivate, bartering to do, all the daily tasks that make up peasant life. ... He was part of his world, not set apart from it. Later we will see him constantly surrounded by people. This did not mark a change in his lifestyle; he had lived that way for thirty years or more. Frequent scenes will show Jesus at table with disciples, even enemies, engaged in the banter that characterises such gatherings. These were continuations of the “family” meals he had been part of during his hidden years.* Ronald Rolheiser adds: *Jesus grew up happily, quite comfortable in the rhythms of family, community, and rural life. When he began his ministry, he already knew how to celebrate at table with family, how to banter, argue, tell stories, share food, drink some wine, and be part of the ordinary follies, tragedies, and joys of everyday living.* Being a woodworker, Jesus would have worked in many houses in the town and known the people well. Jesus was probably one of the most well-rounded human beings you would ever want to know. Because of this, it is understandable that those he called so readily responded. The only way **we** can really get to know Jesus is through scripture, through his stories, his miracles, his actions and his words. Jesuits, among others, recommend that when meditating on scripture it is good to become part of the story even if only as one who is listening. Through this kind of listening, Jesus becomes more than a collection of facts or information, he gradually takes root in our life and instils a desire to know him better and, next time, listen even more attentively. I have the very special privilege and honour of celebrating funerals. In listening to the eulogies, the person who died becomes very real. I not only hear about their love and goodness, their generosity and caring but can feel their presence both in the person speaking and in the words spoken. This is why we celebrate the Word of God today to be reminded of this. It could not be more apt as we also celebrate Christian Unity this week around the theme *Alive in Christ*. When people of faith share their stories about Christ, they share their faith and Christ comes alive in all present. Unity will grow ever stronger when we allow Christ to work within us, healing what needs to be healed, nurturing and strengthening the faith in each of us, inspiring us to work and pray more together until we are all truly **Alive in Christ**.

A year 4 pupil had to celebrate his birthday on crutches and couldn't carry cakes for his class into school without help. His mother asked his brother Noah in year 6 to help his brother carry them into school. *“I could,”* Noah said, *“but I'd prefer not to.”* Spotting a teaching moment, she asked Noah, *“What would Jesus do?”* Noah answered, *“Jesus would heal him so he could carry his own cakes into school.”*