

Reflection Wednesday Week 5 – 2022

One of the great requests for the preparation of the Synod of the Church was to *listen*. Jesus often asked us to listen, yet one of the most difficult challenges we face. The moment we hear something with which we disagree we start working on a response to counter what has been said. If we listen properly, our first response to something with which we disagree is to ask ourselves why we disagree. Sometimes it is because it is a truth we don't want to hear, or it touches an inner prejudice, or because we dislike the person; it can even be about wanting to control the other. The wise will tell us that we will learn more from those with which we disagree because they cause us discomfort and force us to face that which we do not like.

St Augustine believes that to truly listen we must be *silent*:

One of the greatest ways of growing spiritually is the ability to cultivate the habit of *silence*. *Silence* is not the absence of talking but the stillness of the interior: being calm and recollected in order to put one's thoughts together, listen to the divine and follow in the direction of the Lord. Spiritual masters of old cultivated the habit of *silence* and were able to compose sacred music, and write great reflections that still offer direction today. The great spiritual masters tell us that **God is silence** because he is spirit. He speaks through his prophets and his creation. Only in *silence* can we hear his message, really hear it. It is a still, small voice that cannot be heard in noise and mental confusion. *Silence* is a state of total listening. The *silence* of imagination and of the senses is full of intensity, attention and recollection. It is always necessary in order to be and live with God. ***Silence is the important condition of prayer.***