

Homily 11th Sunday Year A 2023

It is all too easy to find and create excuses for not being missionary in spirit and fail to bring the Gospel to others. Jesus call for labourers which is something we can all do in different ways. There are no valid excuses not to labour for the kingdom unless, of course, you have no real belief or trust in God.

A group of businessmen had gathered for their monthly lunch. Once a year, however, they invited their pastors to join them. After the meal they had scheduled a famous actor to provide some entertainment while those gathered enjoyed a coffee and dessert. The actor stood before them dramatically reciting lines from famous plays and poetry. At one point he invited requests from those in attendance. One elderly priest rose and spoke. *"Would you recite for us Psalm 23?"* The actor, a bit surprised by the unusual request, finally agreed. *"Father,"* he said, *"I'll agree to your request under one condition. After I recite the psalm, I'd be honoured if you would then recite it too."* Reluctantly, the elderly priest agreed. So, the actor presented a stunningly beautiful rendition of Psalm 23, to which people responded with enthusiastic applause. Then he turned to the priest and said, *"Okay, Father, your turn."* So, the priest rather hesitantly stood and began reciting the famous psalm. *"The Lord is my shepherd. There is nothing I shall want."*

When he finished, there was no applause, just hushed silence. The people, so moved by his simple recitation, were sitting with tears running down their faces. After a few moments the actor rose and spoke. *"Ladies and gentlemen, I spoke to your ears. But this man has spoken to your hearts. And here's the difference. I know Psalm 23. But this man knows the Shepherd."*

All we need to mission the Good News is to **know the Shepherd and trust in God**. You will gradually discover that the more you speak about the Shepherd the better you come to know him. You begin to experience his presence in the person and people you encounter, in the different experiences you have in life. Even nature seems to be more colourful, more beautiful with a song that is ever more captivating.

We often fail to realise that Jesus spent many years visiting families as a carpenter and household repair man and must have encountered many of not all the different experiences of family life as well as learned the popular wisdom of the people among whom he worked. He must have also spoken and shared his views on scripture and listened to the people and families he encountered. What better training to become a preacher of Good News!! It would also make sense that Jesus did not just start going out to pray alone in the wilderness or spend time away from people to be with the Father in his active ministry. It would have already been an essential part of his prayer life.

Maybe developing a way of talking about passages in scripture with family or with others in a desire to learn and to share one's thoughts will also help us. Spending time alone reflecting on a scripture passage will also be important. The most important ingredient however is trust in God to guide and help us. Jesus promised to do this for us and Jesus always keeps his promises.

God, we know you're crazy for us. You've created us, and you know us, and you love us beyond the wildest capabilities of our imaginations. Help each of us to discover the unique and beautiful way that you call us to respond to that love. May we be open to embrace your generous dreams for us. Give us trust, knowing that it is you who call and you who lead. Give us wisdom, at every step of our life, to invite you to be our guide. Give us courage, that we may claim our terrifying and marvellous role as your hands, feet, and heart in this world. Amen.

A chap enters a grocer's shop and sees a pile of potatoes. He asks the shopkeeper: "What are those?"

"Those are potatoes"

"Can I have a kilo of potatoes individually wrapped?"

The store keeper shakes his head and start wrapping potatoes.

"What are those?"

"Those are plums..."

"Can I have a kilogram of plums all individually wrapped?"

The store keeper, even more frustrated, starts wrapping the plums.

"... and what are those?! "Those are poppy seeds and they are **NOT** for sale!"