

St Jerome

Today is Monday the 30 September, the feast of St Jerome, in the 26th week of Ordinary Time.

As I enter into prayer I slow down. I slow right down and notice where I am, I notice what is around me, and I notice who is around me, the people here, what they look like, what they are doing, the expressions on their faces. In all of this, God is present. Right here, right now. God's presence sanctifies this ordinary place, and these ordinary people, and makes them holy.

Today's reading is from the Prophet Zechariah.

The prophet Zechariah lived and preached in difficult times, around 520 BC. For some time after returning from exile in Babylon, the Israelites experienced hardships and wondered if prophetic promises of a New Jerusalem would ever be fulfilled. In the rebuilding of the Temple, Zechariah sees the dawning of a new age and reminds the people of God's promise to dwell with them in this new Jerusalem. As the result of God's presence, the city will be made 'faithful' and the mountain of the Lord will be made 'holy'. The restored city will be a safe haven for young and old and the streets of the city, once empty and deserted, will teem with people. The dispersed people will be repatriated. Can you imagine how that sounded to the people who first heard that message? How does it sound to you, in the circumstances of your life right now?

In the opening lines of the reading, the Lord's 'jealousy' is mentioned three times. We may think of jealousy in negative terms, but here it describes God's passionate commitment to God's people. Such jealousy in the past resulted in the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem, but now with the same passion God will restore it. Though such a radical change may seem impossible, God will accomplish it - God is faithful.

As you listen to the reading again ? what stands out for you?

The book of Zechariah, whose Hebrew name means 'The Lord remembers', reminds us of God's passionate commitment to us and God's love for us. Where do you see God's restoring hand at work in the world around you? In your own life? You might like to talk to God about this now?