

## Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 January

This weekend is Saturday the 18 and Sunday the 19 January, beginning the Second Week of Ordinary Time.

The choir of Westminster Cathedral sing the Agnus Dei from Palestrina's Missa Brevis: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. These are the words, in the Eucharist, with which we recognise Jesus at the breaking of the bread. Yet there are other times and places too where the presence of Jesus might go unrecognised. Here and now, for instance. How hard do I have to try, to see Him present in this place, in the people around me now, in their faces, and in mine?

Over the last week, the first of what we call 'ordinary time', we have looked at the ordinary and the extraordinary: We have seen people called by Jesus to be disciples - simple fishermen who became leaders of the early church; we have seen a regular 'ordinary day' in the life of Jesus - which includes healing miracles and huge crowds seeking him out; we have heard the ordinary men and women in the Christian community called 'partners of Christ' and 'crowned with glory and honour'. Did you notice at all how paradoxical those things were? Did they seem at all strange to you, or were you at ease with them? One way of reconciling these paradoxes is this: that the difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary is just a matter of recognition, that there is no person, no place, no situation that is 'ordinary' to those who know how to look. That question of recognition is at the heart of today's reading from the Gospel of John.

Imagine a young woman - who's been through a series of relationships that didn't last - finally meeting someone she wants to spend the rest of her life with, and confiding to her best friend, 'I think this is the one.' Funnily enough, the words John the Baptist uses about Jesus here are pretty much the same - 'This is He?', 'This is The One?'. Whilst the context is a little different, can you hear in John the Baptist's words that same sense of recognition, of recognising this is the one we were waiting for, this is the one who will not disappoint?

Can you imagine yourself saying the same words about Jesus: 'This is The One??' Do you have that same sense of recognition, of recognising Jesus as the one you've been waiting for, longing for? - the one who offers you real fulfilment, the one who will not let you down?

As you hear the reading a second time, remember that John is not talking to himself here. There are people listening to him as he speaks about Jesus. Can you imagine who those people are? - and the effect that John's words have on them?

'I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God?'. The Son of God - the Jesus that John speaks of - is present here now. Talk to him freely about what your feelings are towards him, and any desire you have to do what John does and share those feelings with the people around you.