

Friday 24 July

Today is Friday the 24 July, in the 16th week of Ordinary Time.

Oculi mei ad Dominum Deum: My eyes are on the Lord God. Wherever I am right now, on the way to work, walking in the park, sitting at home... what can I see? What can I see around me? I remember for a moment [that God is present in all of this,] that all of this has been made by God, and is loved by God, that God holds me, and all of this, in the palm of his hand.

Today's reading is from the Prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 3:14-17

Return, O faithless children, says the Lord,
for I am your master;

I will take you, one from a city and two from a family,
and I will bring you to Zion. I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says the Lord, they shall no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord.' It shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or missed; nor shall another one be made. At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no longer stubbornly follow their own evil will.

Here is another urgent message. "Return!" "Come back!" When have I heard those words before? Perhaps spoken by a parent? What kind of feelings does that urgency, that persistence evoke in me?

And I hear another shepherd image today. Shepherds that God says He will give to His "wandering children" as one translation puts it. God describes these shepherds as being "after my own heart". What kind of shepherds might they be? Wielding big sticks? Rescuing? What does "after God's own heart" suggest to me?

As you hear the passage again, remember that, in our humanity, we can return again, and again, and again, to God who simply calls "come back"!

Talk to God, as one friend to another, about what is on your heart.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.