Monday 31 August 2020

Today is Monday the 31 August, in the 22nd week of Ordinary Time.

The community of Taizé sing, Dominus Spiritus est, The Lord is the Spirit; the Spirit gives life. God is the source of all life, the one in whom we live and move and have our being. As I look around me now, can I sense God’s presence? Can I sense God’s Holy Spirit here?

Today’s reading is from St Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Today is the last day of August and, in the UK, a Bank Holiday. A leisurely, long weekend with the opportunity to look back on the last few weeks of our official summer; in many ways, a summer like no others with challenges. There is a sense of a shift in the seasons that may call us to evaluate the year that has passed and commit ourselves to a renewal or new venture. Perhaps, it is not a coincidence that the new academic year begins around now with the invitation to a renewed sense of purpose and vision. This year has held unimaginable moments for many during the pandemic... Consider your own feelings at this time of year... How does this season speak to you?

When Paul writes to the community at Corinth, he already understands the value they set on knowledge, he appreciates their ‘need to know’. Gifted orators are the superstars of their day, their eloquence echoing through the streets so that by the end of the day a mind could be changed and changed again. Perhaps not too unlike the streams of information that bombard society today? The sound-bites, clicks and tweets that suggest to us how and what we should think. How do you decide what and who to value? How do you decided what and who to believe?

Clever, but not enough, suggests Paul. Knowledge is one thing, but I come to you bringing ‘mystery’ - the mystery of God. God, who doesn’t need our ‘competence’ but rather channels our weakness and our ‘know nothing-ness’ to fill us with the power of God’s Spirit. As you listen again, accept Paul’s invitation to join him in his weakness, allowing the power of the Spirit to speak of God’s love for you.

“so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.”. How does this phrase speak to you today? Ask God for whatever you need and trust in the power of the Spirit.

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.