

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September 2020

This weekend is Saturday the 20 and Sunday the 21 September, beginning the Twenty Fifth Week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of Pluscarden Abbey sing *Laetetur cor quaerentium*: Let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice; seek the Lord and be strengthened, seek his face always. Entering into prayer today, I too am seeking the Lord, seeking his face, looking for the signs of his presence in my life, gently guiding me in truth and peace and love.

Jesus spent a lot of his time with unpopular people. A good example can be seen in last week's reading from Luke's gospel where a woman anoints the feet of Jesus with precious oil, and wipes them clean with her hair. This, and other events recorded in the gospels, scandalised onlookers – it didn't accord with how they thought God should work, with how the Messiah should behave. This weekend's reading from the Prophet Isaiah teaches us to consider why God might act in ways we don't expect.

Isaiah 55:6-9

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." If sometimes your thoughts dwell on the past, regretting that you didn't do this or that, or on the future, speculating or worrying about what might happen, is there a message here for you? A message to attend to the present, to the now?

And if you sometimes think that God is somewhere else, and that you could really do God's will if only you were somewhere else, if only you had made different life choices, if only you weren't living among such impossible people.... is there a message for you here? That God is not somewhere else, but where you are now?

As the passage is read again, notice the balance here between the nearness of God and the transcendence of God. God is not like us, yet God is close to us.

Your path to God is the one you are on right now, and there is no other. You cannot start, or move on, from anywhere but here. So perhaps now would be a good time to ask God for the help you need to get closer to him.

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.