

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Each time we come to Mass we listen to the readings from the Scriptures that have been chosen for us. We try to hear them as God's Word speaking to us. We ask the question, "What is God saying to me today?" With the help of the homily we try to apply what we hear to what is happening in our lives at this moment. Most of us are listening for a word of hope or a word of encouragement. We like to be assured that we are on the right track. Sometimes we hear a word that challenges or confronts us. We often hear Jesus calling us to a new way of understanding something and through that a call to follow him more closely.

The Scripture readings do not always speak to us easily. What is God saying to us when we listen to the struggle that the Prophet Jeremiah had to speak in God's name? Do we sometimes feel that same inner compulsion to speak out even when we know that what we say will not be well received?

What is God saying to us as we listen to Paul today? How well do we model our behaviour on that new mind that Paul talks about? Do we sometime get overcome by the world around us and take on the values of those who have not been gifted with the same faith as we have?

When we listened to our Gospel today what stood out for us? Perhaps we felt for Peter when we Jesus called him Satan and ordered him to get behind him and not be a stumbling block on the road to the cross that Jesus must travel. Perhaps we said to Jesus that we are ready to carry our cross behind him as long as we can choose which cross to carry and it is not too heavy. Perhaps we didn't hear Jesus say to us that whoever loses his life for my sake will find it, and that he is going to reward each of us according to our behaviour? Were we able to hear those words as words of encouragement for us?

The call to be disciples of Jesus, the call that we hear renewed each week in our Scripture readings, has been distilled and expressed in the eight Gospel Pathways for the renewal of our parishes. Our Parish Pastoral Council believes that we should try to find practical ways of putting the first of those Gospel Pathways into action. Today the Council is asking all of us to have a say about what following that pathway will mean for us as individuals and then what it will mean for us as a Parish Community. I invite you now to take us the piece of paper that has the gospel pathway on it and the question, "What does that mean for me as an individual?"