

HOMILY – MISSION SUNDAY – 23 OCTOBER 2017

Theme – “Learn how to live in this temporal kingdom but set your eyes firmly on the Kingdom of God”

You might not believe me but I pray you will, that there has not been a time when the world has not been on a mission. You, today, at this very moment, are being called to a specific mission. Faith in God will help you to know what your mission is. But, first, let us take a step back. How do we define the word ‘mission’?

Firstly, we must see a need that is not being met. It may be poverty or injustice or persecution or the absence of love. Then, we ask ourselves the question, in faith and prayer, what does the Gospel want me to do? What is God’s will? Then, am I willing to step forward and rise to the challenge? Not out of pride or self-glory but purely for the love of God and care for my neighbour. In a way, the Church is the power house of Mission, it is the biggest non-government agency in the world. Every year the kingdoms, countries and peoples of this world throw up challenges that require a mission response: Famine in Bangladesh, drug crime in Niddry, orphans in Syria, lack of vocations in Edinburgh, poor psychiatric care in Ghana, teen abortions in Dundee, ruined churches in Iraq, shortage of Catholic teachers in Dumbarton, chronic alcoholism in Siberia, growing loneliness and suicide risks at Glasgow University, even division in my own family. Through Baptism in Christ, the Gospel becomes a source of new life, freed from the dominion of sin, enlightened and transformed by the Holy Spirit. That in today’s Gospel, Jesus invites us to set our sights about all on the Kingdom of God but in the process, to do what we can to make the dominions, powers and authorities of this world, just, true and fair.

A church that is primarily concerned about money and making money is not living the Gospel. I remember an old priest telling me, a healthy parish is not glowing in glory that is way into the black but is living just about the bread line, making sure that everyone is being looked after, trusting in God’s providence. Therefore, give to Caesar, his coins, with his head on it, but give to God, the attention, the mercy, the concerns of the world’s peoples, whatever the cost to ourselves. Materialistic people know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. Pope Francis recently spoke about ‘Mission’ by stating, “A self-referential Church, in other words, a Church that only thinks of itself and its success, is not the Church of Christ. We should prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church clinging to its own security”.

So, to finish, I ask the question addressed to all of us. What am I rendering to God today? What do I reckon my mission to be? Where is God leading me? Where am I needed most? Is my rendering only about putting ‘Caesar’s Coins’ in the plate, kind as it is, but what am I truly giving of myself to Mission? Maybe I am doing a huge amount, even too much to the point of losing the plot. Or maybe I’ve become cynical or complacent or even lazy? What do you think? Maybe this is the day I start on a new mission. Don’t leave it till tomorrow because tomorrow may never come. Start now!!!

God Bless us all.

Amen