

Reflecting on John 12:20-36 I was struck by how much was contained within it. Where to start? What is it saying to us in the weeks of lockdown amid the coronavirus pandemic during a very different Holy Week? I was reminded of the practice of "Lectio Divina", the foundation of which is that God speaks through the bible individually, in unique ways and at each particular moment in a person's life.

The rhythm of Lectio is that you read the passage 3 times. Initially as the passage is read / spoken out loud listen for the words or phrases that are significant to you right now - that capture your attention. On the second reading allow the words which caught your attention to spark your imagination...listen for the stirrings within. In reading the third time consider what is God's invitation to you through this scripture? How does this connect with each aspect of your everyday life today? Finally move to a time of quiet prayer....Be Still....

In a unique set of circumstances in strict lockdown here in Tenerife in my first reading of John 12:20-36 I was drawn to:

- Sir we want to meet Jesus...or as the NIV puts it 'we would like to see Jesus'
- They went together
- Jesus replied....All those who want to be my disciples must come and follow me, because my servants must be where I am
- If you walk in the darkness you cannot see where you are going.

In reading a second time...

- We want to meet Jesus...had they any idea what they were asking? A simple request and yet one which had so many repercussions
- They went together...Strength in community...the importance of companionship on a journey whether that is a physical journey or our spiritual or emotional journeys
- A simple request and yet Jesus' response is anything but simple...and it involved death...seeing Jesus and death are related...Seeing is more than just looking, or believing. Jesus says it's about being a participant not a spectator. If I want to see Jesus then I must learn to die.
- Light is crucial - A stained glass window can be made up of colour and story and sections in need of renovation and yet its beauty and purpose are enhanced by light in the right place. Don't get caught up looking at the window frame - look through the window.

What was I being invited to hear, see and know in the third reading? How does the reality of life for me and the many people on my heart this week connect into this?

I was reminded of a book that I read earlier this year: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy. The boy asks a question: "What do

we do when our hearts hurt?" To which the horse replies, "We wrap them with friendship, shared tears and time, til they wake hopeful and happy again."

The work of dying is difficult and painful. If there was any doubt of that I only have to remind myself of those images on the TV of the ICUs and wards across our world; of staff exhausted at the end of shifts; of families unable to attend funerals; of the speed of the virus' impact from life to death.

Am I being asked to die like this? I hope not. But seeing Jesus means learning to die to the parts of my life that bind and blind...fear, control, compulsions, my own agenda, damaged relationships, self sufficiency, anger and resentment and and and.....

This virus has reinforced that the work of dying is painful. It shakes the depths of our being. This Holy Week I am being called to be transformed. I've learnt in lockdown that one of the greatest freedoms I have is how I react and respond to things.

As you read the passage for yourself what is God inviting you to see, hear and know? Is there a new awareness or action that is challenging you? I don't know about you but lockdown has certainly challenged me to stretch beyond my usual limits.

So many people are being light bearers in this season. Communities are coming together. The many who are answering the call to volunteer are bringing light into dark places. Coming together to clap for our workers at 7:00 each evening reminds us of the strength we have in our unity. They are doing ordinary things with extraordinary love and in this, communities are being rebuilt, restored and renewed.

Let's pray that in reading God's Word this week our hearts will be changed and we can live out that change in concrete ways. As Richard Rohr says: Doing what you're doing with care, presence and intention is a form of prayer; the very way to transformation and wholeness.

May the light of Christ shining through our tears  
Become the rainbow of your promise  
Shedding colours of your love's bright presence  
In your grieving, struggling, laughing world.  
(Beyond Our Tears- Resources for Times of Remembrance)