
Reflections

The Year of the Word

THE year 2020 has been dedicated as the Year of the Word in the Catholic Church of England and Wales. The intention is to celebrate, live and share the Word of God and Jesus has shown us effective ways to do this.

One of these ways is to 'question', an act that was misinterpreted as rebellious by the mighty and powerful of his time. Despite this, he continued to 'question' as it leads to deeper reflective thinking and ensures goodness and growth for oneself and others.

The scriptures tell us that Jesus asked over 300 questions, including some poignant ones such as 'Why are you so frightened?', 'Do you believe I can do this?', 'Why do you have such wicked thoughts in your hearts?', 'Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own?', 'Why do you break away from the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?', 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?'. These questions display his genuine care for those in the clutches of fear, his courage to call on the oppressors to reflect on their bad behaviours and his cry for help in desperation.

I come from a culture where questioning

is discouraged. The general perception was that the quieter you were the better. I had to unlearn that behaviour in Britain in order to achieve academic excellence and enjoy social relationships. It is disturbing when just and fair questioning is silenced, especially if it is against political and religious authority figures and often meets with punitive response. If pressed, one who questions should be prepared to suffer intimidation, isolation, emotional and physical abuse just as Jesus had.

This year Christmas seems exceptionally peaceful following the general election and the frenzied hustle and bustle of Brexit debates. There are still, however, many pertinent questions to be addressed in 2020.

May I call up on all those interested in promoting goodness and growth to engage in the Year of the Word. In order to learn how to 'question', let us know Jesus, the Word. 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ' (Jerome's Commentary on Isaiah (Nn.1.2: CCL 73, 1-3).

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