

Saturday of the 7th week of Eastertide

Readings of the mass – **Acts 28, Psalm 10, John 21:20-25**

Yesterday we celebrated the solemnity of the anniversary of the dedication of consecrated churches. Our church was decorated with beautiful flowers yesterday as you can see and thank you to those who did this. Whilst it is important for us to have a physical building - the church, to gather as a congregation – also, the church, we must go further to recognise this ought to represent our heart or our spirit where the Lord wishes to dwell even more so.

“Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place? But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word. (Is 66:1-2). This humility, contrition and fear of God are the characteristics meant by the words in Luke 8:15, “honest and good heart”, in the parable of the sower. We bring in these ‘*flowers*’ that venerate rather than thorns which grows and choke the seed (Lk 8).

We cannot listen to this Gospel passage without getting distracted going back to the last supper narrative in John Ch 13. “One of his disciples – the one whom Jesus loved – was reclining next to Him”, we see in this today’s Gospel that He was in fact reclining on the Lord’s heart. We know that this further means that St. John knew the heart of Jesus, that is, who He really was and how much He really loved. I loved being in parish church in Banbury, which is dedicated to St. John especially being in front of his statue to pray that I may love the Lord like he did. Similarly, St. Paul added that God himself loved us while we were still sinners and died for us. Someone might actually dare to die for a good person but even then, very rarely so (Rm 5). So, God proves that He loves more, and St. John wrote that God IS love (1 Jn 4:8).

It is this love that urged on St. Paul to welcome all who came to him and to preach and teach. Notice it said, “with complete freedom” and in 2 Cor 3:17 we read that “where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”. It is true love that enables St. Paul to preach the truth even if that means he has to disagree with his fellow Jews. We see how much patience he demonstrated in the face of persecution. He said elsewhere that he worked with his own hands, so that he might be an example to show that we must support the weak, remembering the words of Jesus, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20). “Love is patient, love is kind... not irritable. Love bears all things and endures all things” (1 Cor 13). Everything will have its end, but Faith, hope and charity remains.