

**What Are You Looking For? (1 John 3.7-10 John 1.35-42)**  
**A Lenten Reflection by Fr. Dominic Borg, OCD**

The question that was addressed to the two disciples who were following Jesus, is the same question being addressed to us today. "What are you looking for?"

What are you looking for when you come to church? Why do you come to church? When you read the Bible, what are you looking for? Do you want to know more so that you will build your ego? What are you looking for in the Word of God? When you switch on the TV, are you looking for good news or bad news?

Most of the news is bad news, so the very fact that you switch on the TV to watch the news, gives me the indication that you are more happy to hear bad news than to be happy to hear good news. What are we looking for? Brothers and sisters if we do not know what we are looking for...if we do not know where we want to go then any road will take us there. If you do not know where you want to go then any road will take you there. This is the reason why so many people are confused. This is the reason why one Sunday they will go to the Catholic Church, the following Sunday they will go to the United Church, the Sunday after they will go to the Anglican Church. Is it not all worshiping God? Are not all Churches the same? All roads lead to Rome, right? Unfortunately, not all roads lead to Rome. There is a road that leads to God and there is a road that leads to the devil. This is clear in the first reading.

The first reading said that if we have indeed the seed of God .... The seed of God in Greek is the sperma .. strictly speaking, in English it is the sperm of God. Because we have the sperm of God, we have eternal life. We do not have everlasting life. Everlasting life is the devil. It is the devil who has everlasting life. What we have eternal life. Eternal life includes in it also everlasting life, but it is much higher. It is a quality life. It is not just quantity, it is the very life of God the Father that has been instilled in us. This is the reason why Jesus Christ says that His Word is life. It is the life of every human being coming into the world. When Jesus Christ turned to Peter after so many people left - he said to Peter "Do you want to go too?" Go! Go! Do you want to leave the parish? Go, leave. We won't stop you. "You have the words of eternal life and we have come to know that you are indeed the Son of the living God." This is the Word that we at times play with brothers and sisters and unfortunately we make a mess out of it.

This Word today is challenging you and me. What are you looking for? Are you looking for a life of tranquility, mushy, mushy no problems, no persecutions, everything smooth? That is not the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ said, "Just because you bear my name, they will persecute you." "Just because you bear my name" Imagine... Just because we do good deeds. They were accusing Jesus Christ of doing good deeds on the Sabbath and they wanted to kill Him for doing good deeds. We do the same thing to each other. We think that we are worshiping God and then we kill each other. How can this be possible? John is clear today in the first reading. Notice what he has said "the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way". You distinguish whether these are the children of the devil or the children of God. "All who do not do what is right are not from God nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters". Boy! Listen to what Jesus Christ has told us - beware they come to you dressed as sheep, and inside they are ravenous wolves. They will eat you up, be careful. From their words, you will know them. From their fruits you will know them. All those who pretend to be children of God and yet they do not love their brothers and sisters are not from God. They are under the influence of the evil one. The evil one is making a mess of them, a havoc of their lives. But, if we allow the Word of God to grow, as St. Paul says, "do not stifle the Spirit", then the Spirit will guide us. The Spirit will teach us. - The next time don't do it OK! Because, you will hurt yourself and you will hurt your brother. This is not what your Father wants! You are God's son, God's daughter as much as the other person is God's son, God's daughter. How can you say that God is your Father if you are hurting your brother and sister?

We all know brothers and sisters....we all know ... It doesn't take much energy to hurt your brother or sister. It just takes a simple thought. You harbor that thought and without knowing it you pass it to your brothers and sisters. You do not have the energy because the devil has sucked it from you. You do not have the energy to smile ... just a little smile on your face, and you do not have the energy. You have to force yourself to look the other way so that you will not have to smile and greet your brother or sister. You begin to wonder. What are you looking for? Are we looking to build bridges or walls? Are we looking to build walls between each other? The Christian constantly works hard to build bridges, to knock down the dividing walls of hostility, to show that

he is a son born of God and not of the devil. The devil creates division and we have to be constantly on guard.

In the Gospel of John chapter 17 the priestly prayer is very clear. "Father that they may be one as We are one." Where there is unity, that is a sign of God. Two are the signs of God - love in the dimension of the cross - dying for your husband, dying for your wife, dying for your children, dying for your neighbor, dying for your co-worker. Love in the dimension of the cross and unity - when one of these is missing, you are barking up the wrong tree. If there is no love in the dimension of the cross, if you are not ready to die for your brother and sister, because Jesus Christ has told us 'I have set you an example' because 'the way I wash your feet you ought to ....' It is not a choice. I encourage you to do this ... it is a command. It is a command. You ought to wash one another's feet. You ought to die for each other, not kill each other with your attitude, your words, your judgement, your prejudice .. no! I am not exempt from this Word, OK? Far from it. I am not preaching to you. I am preaching to all of us including myself. I am not out of this Word. This Word comes with the same power to you as it comes to me.

We have to be on guard to hear Jesus Christ telling us, "What are you looking for?" To kill your brother or sister. Yes to kill Him. What are you looking for? Are you looking to discover Jesus Christ and walk in His footsteps? If you are looking for Him, you will hear Him saying to you, "Come and see!". Come and see what I can do with you. How I can take your passion of hatred and turn it into a passion of love, because that is what man did. He took God's passion of love and changed it into hatred.

When we look at the cross it speaks about God's love for us and our hatred for God, killing His Son, crucifying Him. When we are crucifying our brothers and sisters, we are repeating the same thing that people did more than 2000 years ago . We are doing the same thing, crucifying the son of God, crucifying the daughter of God. So you see how much God loves us. He speaks clearly. " From your works you will know."

If you want to know if you are following God or the dictates of the devil, look at your thoughts, look at your actions. Watch your words. Try to fit them into the Word of God. If they fit, you are called a child of God. If not, it is about time to repent.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also ought to love one another."

"The glory that you have given me I have them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one."  
(John 13.34; 17.22-24)