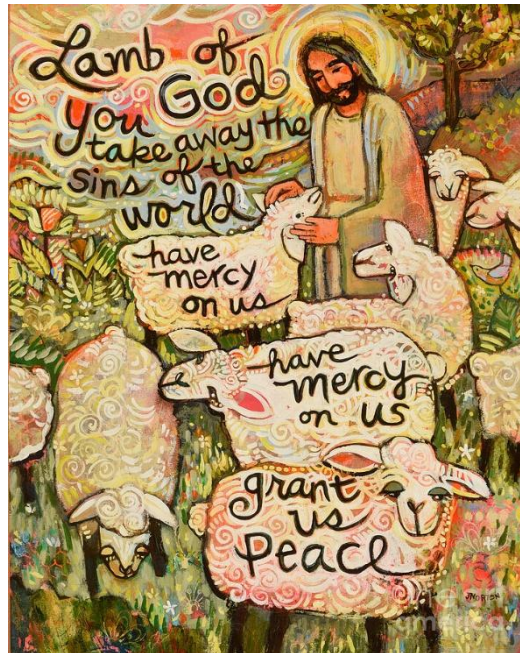


Our hearts are restless....



Lamb of God – Jen Norton

I walked into the estate agents one day some years ago. We were about to move house. “Ah”, he said, “What sort of thing are you looking for?”

Being me... I was *completely* unprepared for this question.... “um....” *What was I looking for?* “Style?, location?, layout?”, he asked, insistently... ..

I hadn't a clue... I hadn't really thought. I guess... I was just looking for a home.

And what's a home?.... Now there's something isn't there. Something intangible, not really to do with buildings, about love, and belonging and relationship ...something about hospitality and welcome....

“What are you looking for?” Jesus asks the disciples. What were they looking for? Did they even know?

“What are you looking for?” asks Jesus...

What do you really want? What are our deepest desires for our lives, for our churches, for our journey as Christians?

I think perhaps we, perhaps most of society, spend our lives trying to answer this question.

Certainly I don't think the disciples knew the answer... All they know is that for some reason they want to be with him. They want... a homecoming to something they might not even know the words for.

Our hearts are restless 'til we find our home in you, says S. Augustine.

They want to enter into relationship. To let themselves be touched by his life, and by all he is and has. Perhaps they wonder if that question "what do you really want" might be easier to answer then.

And they ask him.... Rabbi Where do you live?

The Greek word chosen here for 'live' is '*Menein*' - to stay, remain, abide, dwell.... This is not a casual – hey, where are you hanging out right now? This is an abiding that gives meaning, that changes life ahead.

Rabbis took disciples to live with them, they lived, ate, slept with their teachers. Andrew, the fisherman, and the other man with him, are risking following a whole new way of life.

To dwell or remain is about forming relationships.

And Jesus says, "Come and see"....

That word, *Menein*' – abide - it's the same word the gospel writer uses to describe the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus at his baptism. The Spirit Dwelled on him. And it's the Spirit that revealed Jesus in his Godliness in the River that he invites the disciples – and us – to come and see... to come and step into.

Jesus' invitation "Come...." flows throughout this gospel... come..... and live an experience of love, healing and inner freedom.

It echoes down the centuries to us in the invitation to communion today, where we receive Jesus to dwell in us.... "Come, of all you, come...."

If you accept the invitation – and come to dwell with Love; it makes you a place where love can dwell. A place from where Love can continue to invite.

And there is something about that time with Jesus, that changes and convinces those disciples. They come back having gone from understanding Jesus as "rabbi" – teacher – to "Messiah". They have seen what John saw – the presence of the Holy Spirit of God in Jesus... not just a good teacher, but someone with God's power to save, God's power of healing and hope, of new

life. They might not still know exactly what they are looking for, but they know they have found their home...

John's gospel is the only gospel where these first disciples seek out Jesus, rather than Jesus seek them.

Or do they?

It is John who points them to Jesus. They go perhaps not really sure why they have, because John, who has seen.... shares his experience.

There he is... the Lamb of God...

John had shown the disciples the Lamb of God and they had gone to dwell with him. Andrew now goes to find Simon and invites him to Jesus.

Simon Peter comes – and one day he will be sent forth in the Spirit of God, the rock on which the Church is built, the Holy Church which spans the world, and the ages.

This is what we are called to do – to *come and see* and to invite people home... to say to others *come and see too!*

Here today is a simple gospel. A gospel of time, of dwelling, and seeking, of spending time with Jesus and each other and sharing what we find.

And what we find is the Word of God, the Messiah, the Chosen One, the Rabbi – the one who has the power to make his promises come true, and the ability to teach us the way... the Lamb of God. The Lamb, who is also a Shepherd, the Saviour born a lamb like us in the manger, but who will guide us on our way, knowing what it is to be like us.

'The Lamb', a phrase that to any self-respecting Jew will remind them of the Saving Power of God – the Lamb of the Passover, speaking of his protection and redeeming power to bring us out of all that enslaves and oppresses, and protect us from all evil.

So very near the beginning of his gospel, John the Evangelist – the Gospel Writer - makes sure to point us to what to look for in all that comes after – to whom he is inviting us to get to know and to follow ... the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world....

Come and see, says Jesus.... When we don't know what we are looking for, but we know we are longing.... Come and see the way of the Lamb; the way of

selfgiving love, the way of non-violent truth telling, and deep compassionate empathy... and together we can walk that way in the world as a force for change.

The world is seeking meaning, seeking healing, seeking hope.

What are you looking for? asks Jesus ... well, as we dream dreams for our Church and our community; as we build and grow, as we meet and pray for our people and seek to respond to their needs, joys and sorrows...

Can we this year, find time and open our hearts to respond to his invitation to dwell with him... and to let him share with us his Holy Spirit, and lead us in his ways? Can we let him guide us in what we are looking for, and lead us into pastures new, and refresh us with the beauty of what we already know....?

Can we say to each other, can we say to our community “come and see....”
Come, all of you, come.

Come and dwell with the one who dwells with us

And having seen, can we follow him?

Sisters and brothers, as Isaiah said, The Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel has chosen you.

Invites you to set up home with him.

Location, setting, style power, prestige and position - doesn't matter – it's the love, the hospitality, the belonging, the welcome and relationship that count. No matter where we go, and no matter where we lay our head.

We find our home where he is. And our hearts are restless 'til we find our home in him...

So.... in the words of that great song from Sister Act

I will follow him

Follow him wherever he may go

And near him, I always will be

For nothing can keep me away

He is my destiny

I will follow him

Ever since he touched my heart I knew

There isn't an ocean too deep

A mountain so high it can keep

Keep me away

Away from his love

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