

TUESDAY, 26TH AUGUST 1997

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

a period of quiet reflection

Psalm 40 describes to perfection the mind of a preacher. Here the experience of salvation, the awareness of weakness, and the anxiety for whatever threatens, are all framed in the Covenant, which is the source of peace.

This can make a moving prayer for this time of meditation.

The Second Letter to the Corinthians 1-6 is largely about today's theme.

Some questions to think about

How do I come to terms with being a minister of the Word?

The Gospel is the message of God to the world. Jesus is its true herald. Where do we fit in, with our dodgy morality, our imperfect understanding, and our halting delivery? It is clear we haven't been called because of our amazing human talents of presentation, but for some deeper and more mysterious reason.

Do we find that the very task of preaching demands a specific conversion in us?

Yesterday's theme, of listening, is still relevant. We must beware of proclaiming ourselves and our prejudices, we must take care to continue as disciples - people under instruction. The grace to learn is a pre-condition for those who proclaim.

What are my prejudices, which make me unlike Christ, and disqualify me as his herald? Can I hear my un-Christlike self when it speaks?

How does humility mingle with divine vocation, the heralding of God?

One could read the *Rule of St Benedict* to meditate on humility, which has a quality of endlessness: there is always further work for humility to accomplish. St Paul has much to say about the contrast between his life and the message he bears (*earthenware vessels*, 2 Cor 4:7)

"And so it is with the fear of the Lord always in our mind that we try to win people over. But God sees us for what we are; and I hope your consciences do, too."