

NO SLEEPING ON THE JOB

The Gospel passage today (Matt 9:36-10:8) is often used by Priests to promote vocations to the Church. However, it is important that the Priest, including myself, do not miss the message for ourselves. Even though we have accepted the priestly office, we do not always fulfil its demands as true and holy labourers. We are called and ordained to set aside hours every day to pray and make sacrifices, through our vows, for the redemption of the world. We are called every day to preach the Truth and not whitewash the Gospel of repentance. We are called to hear Confession every day, in order to bring God's mercy to His children, by dispelling (casting out) the darkness of sin from the soul. Jesus gives the Priest this authority and it must be dispensed at all times. If we Priests are lazy, then the Church suffers.

JESUS CHALLENGES US IN THE GOSPEL EVERYDAY TO CHANGE OUR LIVES. Remember that you, the laity, are given a share in the priesthood of Jesus since baptism. So, everyone has a part to play, as a labourer in the harvest field of the Church. It is our duty to gently challenge the lapsed Catholic and never give up praying that they will return to Jesus someday. This is why Jesus says; ... *go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel*. In other words, seek out the Catholics who have become lukewarm and those who have lost their faith in our parish. Evangelise the lapsed neighbour or family member. Don't give up on them.

TO BE LOST ON EARTH WILL LEAD TO AN ETERNAL LOSS OF GOD IN THE NEXT LIFE. Everyone is looking for peace and joy but some need to be reminded that only God can give us this for all eternity. To reject Him is to gamble with eternal life. If they refuse to listen, then at least we tried, and kept trying. Everyone must see themselves as a evangelising disciple of Christ. Jesus tells us that the person who keeps and teaches His Commandments will be considered great in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 5:17-19). Jesus has given us the qualifications to be administrators of His Covenant. The Covenant is His loving and merciful relationship with us on earth. The relationship will continue into the next world for those who practice faith and respect it. Our bodies are consecrated temples since baptism and to respect the body is to respect God, who lives in us here on earth. We must encourage people not to divorce themselves from this heavenly marriage. God informs Moses (Exodus 19:2-6) that we are a consecrated people and all share in the priesthood of Heaven. This week I am on the island of Patmos, off Greece, where St. John the Apostle received visions from Jesus and wrote the Book of Revelation. You are all in my Masses. God bless, Fr. Brendan.