
HOLY HERMITS ONLINE

21st Week after Pentecost, Year A, Holy Hermit St Gall

Luke 10. 1-9, 2 Timothy 4.9-17a

“He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’”

I love this Gospel - it speaks of the work that each Christian is invited by Jesus to participate in. Sharing the Good news of God's love with those who have yet to experience it.

I truly believe that at HHO we are called to live out this vocation and outreach via technology to those who have need of not only learning the Good news, but living it out together as an active community.

It is a big ask for anyone to undertake this work, and I am often amazed at how God can act through any person who offers themselves for the task of mission regardless of their character, circumstances or challenges.

Our ministry is diverse and creative, making use of not only the setting we find ourselves in but each of our members gifts and quirks. God shows up regularly in our spaces.

It might seem counter-intuitive to have named ourselves after the Holy Hermits - people who love silence and solitude as well as the opportunities to live in community and missioning outward.

Chat invite: Think missionary - I think someone with a big personality and loud manner who has a way with words and can share the gospel in a compelling way.

Think hermit - I think someone who is quiet and enjoys time spent away from people, maybe a bit of an introvert and often prefers the company of animals.

I think that it is a perfect combo, to be outward facing while spending plenty of time connecting inward to our source, our creator, redeemer and sanctifier who journeys with us and guides our ministry.

Today we remember a missionary hermit. Someone who spent time sharing the good news of the gospel with those who hadn't learned of Jesus story yet, while also spending time in solitude and spiritual communion with God.

St Gall our hermit for today who inspires us to bring our teddies to worship is one such quirky person who can be called a Missioning Hermit. What we know of his life can really encourage us in our great commission.

An Irish monk who accompanied St Columban on a journey to Europe in the 6th century Gall or Gallus is widely celebrated as the powerful preacher responsible for most of Switzerland embracing Christianity.

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When left behind by his missioning buddies because of illness he continued to live the Rule of St Columban, a strict order maintaining fasting, abstinence and silence and inspired others to do the same, while also converting the native population.

A local folk story tells that while living in solitude in the forest he befriended a bear in the later part of his life, who would bring him firewood. This is why the teddies are relevant to remember St Gall.

Now what I pick up on from his story is that although he was originally in a missioning group, then suffered an illness that meant travelling on was no longer an option for him. He had a big personality and was compelling enough to be remembered for his preaching. His force of personality led him to destroy heathen God statues while also convincing the locals to turn to Christ. He preferred the company of animals, and founded a base for the order which he lived through his lifetime prioritising silence.

I personally find this man highly relatable and wonder how many of our folk at HHO also feel kinship with Gall?

He didn't plan on missioning to the Swisse people alone, but answered the call to share the Gospel with the circumstances he found himself in.

He suffered ill health but did not let it stop him from fulfilling his vocation and calling, in fact it was a key part of his story.

He was able to remain true to his hermetic living style while still influencing Switzerland at large to embrace Jesus Christ.

We have a vast missionary field in the digital spaces where we are called to be a light for the Gospel. It might not be a space we are entirely comfortable or native to, but we are together and observe the way that God speaks through our ministry to others who find us online and make a home with us.

We have many who have chronic illness or disability as part of their story as well as those who find traveling to local Churches indelible and need an alternative to be participating members of the body of Christ. We also have animals as soul companions in our midst and relate to them as beings of great love and faithfulness, living examples of God's creative love.

So, let's be encouraged today to answer the call however God places us to do so. Whatever our challenges might be we can always share Jesus light with those around us if only we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us. And to be missioning people while also remaining true to ourselves is part of our calling. God sends all kinds into the missionary field, including each of us, it's our job to remain faithful and tapped into God's presence through contemplative living and practices while reaching outward to share Jesus' message of Love and grace.

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A Prayer for Missionaries and Thanks for Gall

We praise you, Lord, for witnesses through the ages who have told your story and made you real to the next generation. We thank you for people whose names are well known and prominent, and we thank you for those whose names are long lost in the annals of history – but who are known to you. We praise you for all whose good Christian lives have impacted on who we are, and what we are, and where we are. We especially thank you for St Gall and all those inspired by him to mission. We praise you that in every generation there are witnesses who stand out, who stand up to be counted, who make a difference to the Christian path. We praise you, Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that we have been brought by word, by deed, by action to follow you. Amen.