

Is it because I am a social misfit or is it because I'm a disciple of Jesus? "*Foxes have holes*" says Jesus, "*and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head*". I live in a particularly spacious presbytery with many of the conveniences of 21st Century living; not for me that uncertainty each night as to where I am to *lay down my head*. But there is still a very strong sense in which this saying of Jesus speaks to me. It's not, I believe, telling me to abandon my presbytery and to live on the street. What it is telling me is that wherever I am I should never feel totally comfortable. Christian living should always have a certain edge to it. Nothing belongs to us. We are constantly on a journey. Our Sabbath rest always eludes us.

St Paul says something very sinister, but in a very different way, to the Galatians. We Christians enjoy the wonderful freedom of the children of God. We relate to God as our loving Father, and Jesus as our brother. But this gospel freedom is not given us for our own personal enjoyment and indulgence. Our Christian freedom is not our own. Our freedom is given us for the sake of the other, for the sake of our neighbour.

This homelessness, this living our lives for others, extends to the Church around. The Church is not a bulwark against the world. The Church is not some kind of optional alternative to the uncertainties of the world, not a kind of spiritual pillow upon which we can lay our spiritual heads. The Church always points beyond itself – to the infinite, to the transcendent, to the poor and oppressed, to our neighbour and to the outsider.

So that means I am not just a **social** misfit, but an **ecclesiastical** misfit as well. Whatever church I belong to I'm a bit of a square peg in a round hole. While writing this homily I came across some words of Cardinal Francis George, until recently Archbishop of Chicago. This is what he wrote: "The Church is where you go when you want to be free." We need rules and regulations, obligations and duties, but ultimately, the Church is much more; an opening to heaven; free access to the Father; a conduit for the Spirit; an environment where we are free to be what God created us to be - the children of God.

"Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Social misfit and ecclesiastical misfit I may be, but hopefully also, a disciple of Jesus.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion.

Fr Michael