

OCTOBER 9 2025 MSGR. SAM BIANCO

"Search, and you will find."

As I'm sure is evident to you, I'm a senior citizen. At 85, I guess I'm more a senior senior citizen, so I'm moving into a special category. I spend lots of my time living, being with senior citizens in the retirement home. And we've lots to share and talk with one another.

Sometimes we complain. Sometimes, though, it's just a reflection of what's gone on in the world we know. The people who are my contemporaries now, we were all born just at the beginning of the Second World War. And we all say to ourselves, "Boy, in Canada we lived in a golden time, up until just recently."

Yes, there were lots of problems we didn't face, like relations with First Nations, and there was a whole thing about the nuclear war and possibilities... but it was a time of reasonably great prosperity for a lot of people, welcoming people in, and it looked like we were going in a culture—in a really marvellous and great direction.

And then, now, it seemed to us things have changed dramatically. Family relationships have changed so very, very much. Our sense of security is not what it used to be. In religion, there were discussions and debates about something that we cherished. And so, here we are, faced with these challenges.

But it's not just us senior citizens. Collectively, and I know this Mass is televised in various places in the world—in Canada, we're faced with a collective number of problems that challenge who

we are. I'm not an expert in the culture, but certainly from what I know of the economic challenges, we're really faced with large and big challenges, about where work is going to come from, jobs, and what our identity is going to be. And that means that we have to respond and act.

Now, faced with these kinds of challenges, there's a number of responses. One is just fatalism: "Well, there's nothing we can do, it is as it is." Another one is being locked in, not being able to do anything, not wanting to do anything—a kind of despair that freezes people. And, certainly, a third possibility is false hopes. There's always a temptation at a time of crisis to put up heroes who are false heroes.

And that's not what the Gospel says. The Gospel says that, in the midst of this, no matter what age we are, what people we are, we must now once again continue to search, to seek, and to find. The beauty of those words is they come from Jesus himself. They reflect his own experience. In his humanity, he gave up his divinity, and he shared with us in his humanity. In his humanity he spent 30 years searching and seeking. And then in his public life, that's what he did, in a very intense way.

To search, to seek out, to find out God's presence in his life. Through John the Baptist, through the Holy Spirit, all the powers that were at work in Jesus, as he searched out to find the reign, the kingdom of God—not as something in the future, but as in the here and now. One day fully, but here and now, this is God's world and that's God's kingdom, and he lived, and breathed, and believed that deeply. His searching was not in vain. Even in the

last moments of his life, he was continually searching, on the cross, for the signs, evidence of God's presence, in the world.

Jeremiah says that God searches everybody's heart. And he searched the heart of Jesus, and he found a heart that was pure, and good, and strong, and devoted. And Jesus, having come to search himself—that's what he did! He went out, in his public life, to search, and find everybody. And that includes you and me.

First, you and me, and when we're sinners, when we do bad things, when we're evil, when we make a mess of the world... He wants to be close. He'll chase us like lost sheep, up and down every alley and corner we get lost in. He searches especially for the wounded. And today, we think in our world of people, so many people wounded by mental illnesses and the challenges. And Jesus didn't back away. When the demons tried to destroy a person, Jesus came in, and touched those who were mentally challenged and ill.

He challenged us that the poor persons weren't to be in despair. They were given the opportunities. They needed to see their gift in challenges. And he also challenged religion when it was crippled, and wasn't doing good for people. He went out, and searched, and found, and challenged the religious leaders, and said, "You have the right idea to worship God, but you have to do it in such a way that you're worshiping God, and not yourselves and your own customs. And I come to bring you the fullness of that."

So Jesus came, and searched out. And what did he want to search out? He wanted to give people, not scorpions and snakes, but eggs and fish. I mean that literally, material things, but eggs and fish in the sense of the spiritual resources you and I need, to be able to sustain life in this world, and to meet the challenges.

And it doesn't matter what age, we continue to need to search and find. And that's why the beautiful part of Jesus is he not only searches and finds, and looks for me and you, and all of us who are in trouble, he gives us this marvellous vocation. He tells all of us, once you've been lost and found, don't stop there. Now you start going out, and searching.

Use all your talents and gifts, yes, to take care of your family and friends, but you have gifts and talents, you can search out, and you can find people who are poor, people who are poor, and people who are lost. And it doesn't matter at what age. A senior senior citizen in a bed is very capable of searching and finding, through his or her prayer, and pleading, pleading that God will come, and heal this broken world.

And the marvellous part of this story is it's not only Jesus searching for us. Jesus himself is searching, and he's pleading with you and me to search. We have a special gift. He sent us the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God, who pushes, shoves, encourages, entices all of us to see God's presence in the world, and to use all the gifts that God has given us.

We haven't been abandoned, we're not lost. There's lots of good spirits in the world, not just evil. So we need to find the good spirits in the culture, the good spirits in music, the good spirits in

economics, but most especially, the Holy Spirit, who comes to breathe life into the world, and into you and me.

To purify you and me, when we have evil desires and want to destroy one another, and to hold out for all of us the hope that this is God's creation. Hope, said Saint Paul, that is seen—that's not hope. You hope for things not seen, in the expectation that the Holy Spirit, using our gifts, and grace, and our freedom, will bring to life the good things that this world needs.