

September 26th 2021 • Homily 50th Anniversary Jesuit
Toon Suffys SJ

Not belonging to: when I was young: we do not go to a Protestant school, or to a non-Christian hospital, we do not buy from people who are not Catholics we don't play with children from another youth movement, what do you notice today - I think there is more openness: so the world has not become worse - the world has improved a lot.

Jesus says: you must not stop the good that others do - what you must stop is the evil that people do to each other, especially the evil that the strong do to the weak - what else do you need to stop: the evil within yourself: cut off your hand, put out your eye...

Stop the evil that people do to each other. That was my dream when I became a Jesuit: to denounce the strong and stand up for the weak: weak in labour relations (employees against employers and big firms) - what has it become: bringing spirituality to the little people -

I discovered: how great ordinary people can be - a mother who lives with backache every day and yet cares for her children and her husband day and night - people in depression who persevere against all odds: how strong you have to be to do that - a woman who says a good word to all the sick people in the neighbourhood, she herself became paralysed by an illness and what she still does is receive people and listen to their stories -

Some were unbelievers, many were Christians, and most were Catholics, all had no great idea of themselves, they considered other people to be greater and better than themselves. But they were doing the work of Jesus: being with people and being attentive to the needs of their fellow men.

That is what I have been trying to proclaim for the last 20 years: God's Spirit is constantly speaking in those many ordinary people who do many small things and thus keep the world upright. That is great. I have seen the greatness of God. I have seen that and not stopped it, that is probably my contribution to it.

As far as I have got to know Ben Frie SJ, he too has wanted to proclaim God in showing all that is good and beautiful. All his Jesuit life he too has been searching for God in our world, in people, in art and music, in prayer and silence. Ben has been constantly looking to discover God in people and to make people aware of this. That is what we call spirituality: Discovering God's Spirit in everyday life.

The people of God, the people in whom God makes this world the kingdom of God, include many more people than we often fear. Sometimes we think that faith is in decline. Fewer people are coming to church. Perhaps God is urging us to look beyond the boundaries we set: Christian, Muslim, Hindu.

No, God invites us to look at his Spirit in people. And whether they do good among the gathered leaders or in the camp among the common people, as in the first reading with Moses. Jesus says: "Do not stop them. Rather stop the evil that belittles and destroys people. And let God's Spirit be in all people of good will.