



## **Opening Hymn: "Hiding Place" by Liam Lawton**

*I will search in the silence for your hiding place.  
In the quiet, Lord, I seek your face.*

Where can I discover the wellsprings of your love?  
Is my search and seeking in vain?  
How can I recover the beauty of your word?  
In the silence I call out your name.

Where can I find shelter to shield me from the storm?  
To find comfort, though dark be the night?  
For I know that my welfare is ever in your sight.  
In the shadows I long for your light.

Lead me in your footsteps along your ancient way.  
Let me walk in the love of the Lord.  
Your wisdom is my heart's wealth, a blessing all our days.  
In the silence I long for Your world.

## **Opening prayer:**

Lord, of the quietness reach out and hold me.  
Draw me gently into your peace.  
And in the loving silence of your heart,  
Attune my ears to the sounds I never listen to.

The harmony that lies in you,  
The discords in the world you've put me in.

The laughter and the tears in other people's lives.  
Make me more sensitive to other people's needs.

Sometimes I hear the words that others speak, but fail to grasp their meaning.  
Help me to hear the worry hidden in a throw-away remark,  
the fear wrapped in a joke,  
the insecurity behind unbending views.

Let me identify the cry for help so casually expressed.

Help me to listen more,

To think, and think before I speak, and then to think again.

And Lord, teach me to hear sincerity in those who see and say things in a different way.

Give me the grace not to condemn or criticize,

But first to search for common ground,

And grasp the thing that draws us all together,

Not concentrate on what holds us apart.

Help me to take the richness of another's thought

And hold it, precious as my own.

Above all, may I hear the gentle echoes of your love reflected all around me.

Give me the joy of listening to your voice, and to the quiet rustle of your arms enfolding me.

### **Reading:**

**(James 1:22-25)**

Saint James reminds us: " But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers... For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing."

### **Reflection:**

Today we celebrate the feast of St John Bosco who from the early age listened to God's Spirit and discerned God's desire for him. Even as a young boy he was eager that his companions be "Good Christians and Honest Citizens". His personal experience of losing his father at the age of 2, and the obstacles he encountered in his efforts to get an education so he could be ordained a priest, led him to befriend and work with young people.

The feast of Mary Immaculate, December 8<sup>th</sup> 1841 strengthened his conviction in his call to be a sign and bearer of God's love for the young. Bartholomew

Garelli, a boy of about 15 entered the sacristy where John Bosco was preparing to offer Mass. He was an orphan, in from the countryside trying to find work. He was lonely, illiterate and hadn't received any religious instruction. John Bosco listened to his story and was deeply moved by the boy's circumstances. He prayed a Hail Mary with Bartholomew and invited him to return the following Sunday and to bring his friends along.

What would Don Bosco do? He had been offered 3 opportunities to minister in Centres where he would receive a good stipend, but what about his boys? Who would care for them? They needed him and if he did not stay with the young they would be on their own. Following a period of discernment Don Bosco decided to dedicate his life to the poor and abandoned youth he met in Turin. He trusted that 'Divine Providence' would take care of him and his boys.

**Don Bosco was open to the ways and call of God, he learned how to read the signs of the times and how to respond to the true needs of others.**

Closer to home, Fr Denis Hallinan from Limerick was very eager to join Don Bosco and the Salesians in their mission to the young in Turin. However Don Bosco advised him "Go home to your Diocese and you'll do more for the Salesians than you would by entering". Fr Denis Hallinan heeded Don Bosco's request and eventually became Bishop of Limerick in 1918. He saw a need for an agricultural college in his Diocese and he invited the Salesians to Copsewood in Pallaskenry. The Salesian Sisters arrived a year later to Halla Íde in Thomas Street where they opened an evening school for girls who worked mainly in factories.

**Bishop Denis Hallinan listened to Don Bosco's advice and responded to unmet needs thus fulfilling God's plan.**

Like Don Bosco and Bishop Hallinan each one of us is invited to listen and to respond to needs. Today we are called, by our Bishop Brendan, on a journey of listening and being open to the Spirit of God who speaks to us through others and the circumstances of our lives. During our Synod journey we are called to discern God's desire for our Diocese.

**Prayer to Don Bosco:**

Saint John Bosco,  
Friend of the young,  
Teacher in the ways of God,  
Your dedication to empowering the needy inspires us still.  
Help me to work for a better world,

where the young are given the chance to flourish,  
where the poor's dream for justice can come true,  
and where God's compassion is shown to be real.

Intercede for me as I bring my needs to you  
and to Our heavenly Mother, the Help of Christians.

St John Bosco, Pray for us!

## **Final Hymn: "Here is a man" by Hugh O'Donnell SDB**

Here is a man who found a way  
to make the stars above our heads seem brighter  
than the day;  
he offered hope, he made a family of the young  
by living freely, spending night and day  
giving life away, finding hearts ready to respond;

### **CHORUS:**

And so we keep this memory of his life,  
memory filled with joy and goodness,  
reaching out to everyone,  
calling us to love,  
bringing us to God  
with a message for the world.

2

Here is a man who in his day  
brought the sun to shine upon the orphan  
and the stray;  
his was a home, the welcome more than you could say,  
his living freely, spending night and day  
giving life away, finding hearts ready to respond;

### **CHORUS:**

And so we keep ....

3

Here is a man who came to say  
that loving God in everyone would brighten  
every day;  
love was his plan, the laughter shining in his eyes,  
his living freely, spending night and day  
giving life away, finding hearts ready to respond;

### **CHORUS:**

And so we keep ....

