



AMDG
14TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR B
4TH JULY 2021



‘Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy’

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.

Today’s readings provide us with valuable lessons in discipleship and humble faith. The calling of Ezekiel and Paul brings them into challenging situations. But they draw strength and endurance from their relationship with God, as does Jesus himself from the Father.

Ezekiel lived through turbulent times. Despite the opposition he experienced as God’s messenger, he was not deterred from sharing God’s message with the rebellious Israelites. (*First Reading*)

As well as facing opposition and challenges from community members, Paul is also experiencing unwelcome personal suffering. However, through his ‘thorn in the flesh’, the Lord has helped him grow in understanding. He is not to depend on himself, but rather on Christ’s power. Divine grace works best through vulnerability and humility. (*Second Reading*)

Jesus, too, has to cope with opposition and rejection. The people of Nazareth struggle to believe in him because they earlier knew him as one of their local community. They are convinced that he could not be anyone special. This amazes and hurts Jesus. (*Gospel*)

Today’s *Psalm* is a prayer to God for mercy in times of trouble. This hymn of lamentation is made in a spirit of trust in God’s compassion.

This week, I may want to pray for divine comfort and solace, as we as a society face life’s desolations and trials. I also pray for my sisters and brothers across the world who are living through times of great loss and fear.

SECOND READING 22 CORINTHIANS 12: 7-1

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.' So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

I find a quiet, private, comfortable place to sit. I allow myself time to slow down into the present moment, offering the Lord my alert attention.

In my own way, I ask the Trinity for a blessing.

I then read Paul's text ... maybe even out loud to feel the words enter my body. I may linger on particular phrases, or get an overall sense of this profound message.

Now I sit in silence, allowing the Word of God to speak to me in my own heart.

I read the passage again, noticing how Paul speaks from a place of confident humility. Perhaps I beg the Holy Spirit to show me where I am being drawn to deeper humility in my own life.

How might I be imprisoned by my pride, my attachments, my conditioning?

How am I being invited, as was Paul, to live radically and fully out of God's love, as a beloved daughter or son of the Father?

I ponder ...

Perhaps I allow my prayer to turn towards my weaknesses, my poverty.

I invite the Spirit, who knows me intimately, to help me place my trust in 'the power of Christ staying over me'. I ask that, like Paul, I might surrender ever more deeply to my risen Lord.

In silence, I take my vulnerabilities and the fragility of the world to my loving, powerful Father, sharing whatever has arisen from the depths of my being.

As I end my prayer, I ask for the grace of a radical, child-like trust, depending on Christ to help set things right, and to restore balance within my life and in our world.

Our Father...

GOSPEL MARK 6: 1-6

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us? And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracles there, though he cured a few sick people by laying hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Like Jesus before me, I withdraw to a quiet place of solitude to pray, perhaps out in nature, or even on a prayer walk. I ask the Holy Spirit to help still my inner being and be present to Jesus's loving presence.

When ready, I read the Gospel slowly, several times.

I probably recognise the story ... but there may be aspects of it which haven't struck me before. I spend as much time as I need with these.

Jesus is facing opposition and rejection as he tries to do his Father's will in his home town. Maybe this brings to mind similar experiences in my own life when I have felt misunderstood, disempowered ...?

Or perhaps I am drawn to ponder the experiences of disadvantaged people across the world. I share whatever arises with my compassionate Lord, who truly understands us all.

Using my imagination, I may take time to enter more deeply into the Gospel scene in whatever way I can. Perhaps I sense Jesus's mood ... the disciples' mood ... their confusion at the lack of respect and faith of the Nazareans. I may feel drawn to the Lord's side ... to comfort him in his sense of rejection. I allow the narrative to come alive. I remain with Jesus and his followers as the story unfolds. I notice... I ponder... I listen... I share ...

When I am ready, I ask the Lord to be truly astonished by his wisdom, as were those in the synagogue. I beg to be drawn into deeper friendship, relationship and dependency on him.

Glory be ...

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Within your temple, we ponder your loving kindness, O God.

Entrance Antiphon

I shall be very happy to make my weakness my special boast,
so that the power of Christ may stay over me.

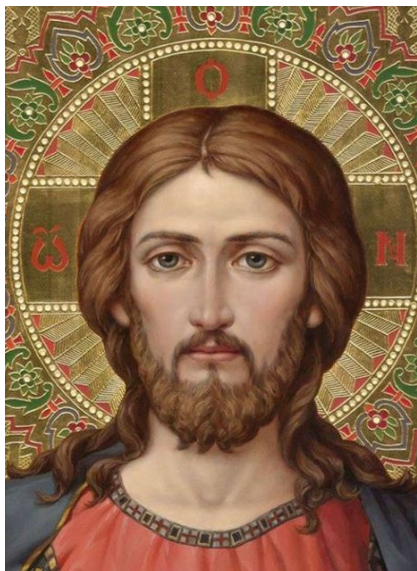
Second Reading

The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives.

Gospel Acclamation

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Ezekiel 2: 2–5; Psalm 122 (123); 2 Corinthians 12: 7–10; Mark 6: 1–6



The Lord has said,
'My grace is
enough for you:
my power is
at its best
in weakness'



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