



AMDG
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
19TH JULY 2020



The Lord is our Merciful Judge

OPENING PRAYER

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.

This Sunday we are, again, reminded of God's central characteristic – merciful love. We are always in need of forgiveness, and the readings today assure us both of God's mercy and compassion and the promise of assistance. The Holy Spirit is given freely, to help us in our weakness.

Today's *First Reading* reaffirms that God's mighty strength is demonstrated through fair judgement. And, because God is lenient and kind to us, we might be moved to treat others in the same way.

The *Psalms* continue the theme of God's quality of mercy. God is full of compassion, abounding in love and truth. God is forgiveness.

The *Gospel* deals with the problem of evil. God's kingdom is one of truth, justice and integrity, but it exists in an imperfect world. St Matthew tells us that God will be faithful to those who have tried to seek him in the midst of the reality of evil.

St Paul tells us that when we need help in this regard, the Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. When I struggle to pray for what I need, the Spirit prays for me! (*Second Reading*)

Let's ask, this week, for the help of the Spirit, who prays in and for us. May we receive what we need to cope with the evils of the world and with our own weaknesses, and may we find our strength in the loving mercy of God.

SECOND READING ROMANS 8: 26–30

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, that same Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what the Spirit means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

Wherever I am, and whatever I have been doing, I now turn my attention to this time of prayer. I try to become still, gently becoming conscious that I am in presence of the Holy Spirit, who knows my heart, who can express my pleas and who desires to help me in my weakness.

I open myself to trust ... If it helps, perhaps I give a deep sigh of relief that I am known so profoundly!

I read the text slowly, pausing as often as I am moved.

To where in the text am I drawn? Why is that, I wonder?

I may like to ponder the Spirit coming to my help in such a personal way.

How does this make me feel?

Do I welcome the Spirit praying, on my behalf, for what I actually need rather than for what I think I need?

Am I able to rest assured in this divine assistance?

Perhaps I feel weak at times ... rather like the daniel mentioned in this week's Gospel reading?

Maybe I sometimes sense a shallowness within myself ... a forgetfulness of God ...?

Or is it a growing ache for God that I don't know how to express?

The greatest gift of the Spirit may be to remind me of my dependence on God ...

With the Spirit, even my weakness, my inadequacies and my lack of prayer can lead to God's life deepening in me.

I stay with the Lord, for whatever time I have left, pondering the love of the Lord for me.

When ready, I end with the sign of the cross.

GOSPEL MATTHEW 13: 24–30 (shortened version)

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner’s servants went to him and said, ‘Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?’ ‘Some enemy has done this’, he answered.

And the servants said, ‘Do you want us to go and weed it out?’ But he said, ‘No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.’”

I enter this time of prayer by reverently approaching Jesus the teacher.

I sit at his feet and listen deeply to what he is trying to tell me.

Yes, he is speaking to the crowds, but he is also speaking directly to me.

As I slowly pray the Gospel, what am I noticing in what Jesus says and in the way he says it? What is touching me as I listen?

Perhaps I am thinking about the evil I see around me, and wondering how to cope with it?

Or maybe I am drawn to ponder the weeds I can discern within myself – doubt, mistrust, self-reliance, fear ...?

Could it be that realising where my faults lie can make me humble, more tolerant of others?

As I read again, I may be drawn to the quiet, measured reaction of the landowner.

Perhaps I yearn to approach things in a more measured way myself?

Have I the patience to wait for God’s purposes to be fulfilled?

I continue to pray, asking for whatever I need.

Perhaps I pray for the constancy always to seek what is good and to ask for an ever-deeper trust in the great depth of God’s mercy.

Glory be ...

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

You govern us with great lenience.

First Reading

God of mercy and compassion, abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me.

Psalm

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness.

Second Reading

I tell you of a truth, my Beloved, even in these high seats there is both wheat, and tares, and among the laity there is wheat, and tares. Let the good tolerate the bad; let the bad change themselves, and imitate the good. Let us all, if it may be so, attain to God; let us all through His mercy escape the evil of this world.

St Augustine, Sermon no. 23 on the New Testament

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

Wisdom 12: 13.16–19; Ps. 85 (86); Romans 8: 26–27; Matthew 13: 24–43



'Gather the
wheat into
my barn.'



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