



**AMDG**  
**21ST SUNDAY IN**  
**ORDINARY TIME**  
**YEAR A**  
**27TH AUGUST 2017**



**‘Listen, Lord, and answer me.**  
**Save your servant who trusts in you’**

**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful  
to unite in a single purpose,  
grant your people to love what you command  
and to desire what you promise,  
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,  
our hearts may be fixed on that place  
where true gladness is found.

In today’s First Reading, Isaiah shows us how the Lord, as king, rules – he is one who cares for his subjects as for his own children. The worthy king holds the ‘key’ of absolute authority. The Gospel recalls Simon Peter’s answer to the question, ‘Who do you say that I am?’ As a trusted servant he is given the ‘keys’ of the king.

The apostle Paul, in the Second Reading, is moved by the richness and depth of the Lord’s thoughts and ways. He speaks not through fear and awe, but rather through wonder and gratitude. Likewise, the Psalm is a song of praise in thanksgiving for the faithfulness and love of the Lord, which always come before any response on our part.

Perhaps, this week, I might feel called to ponder anew that ‘faithfulness and eternal love’ of the Lord for me, and what my response to this might be. Who do I say the Lord is, and what might my answer mean for the way I live my daily life?

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM: PSALM 137

*R./ Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands.*

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,  
you have heard the words of my mouth.  
Before the angels I will bless you.  
I will adore before your holy temple.

I thank you for your faithfulness and love  
which excel all we ever knew of you.  
On the day I called, you answered;  
you increased the strength of my soul.

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly  
and the haughty he knows from afar.  
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,  
discard not the work of your hands.

I enter into prayer slowly and take time to become still. I am patient. How do I feel as I come to prayer today? Perhaps it may help to imagine myself before the holy temple in the presence of angels. I read the lines of the psalm, very slowly, perhaps out loud if it helps. I pause at the end of each line, allowing the words to penetrate me until they seem to fill my being. I notice what moves me and I linger. I might like to share with the Lord what seems important to me now. Perhaps something of the eternal, faithful love of the Lord is striking me. What does this love, which is without parallel, feel like? What might my response be like? Or maybe it is something about me being a 'work of the Lord' that draws my attention. Do I have a sense of being noticed by the Lord? What is it like to be in the Lord's hands? How do I feel now? I allow my prayer to open out in any way that feels appropriate. When it is time for me to bring my prayer to a close, I come back to the heart of the psalm – thankful adoration. I end with some words of heartfelt gratitude before making a slow sign of the Cross.

## GOSPEL: MATTHEW 16: 13-20

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But you,’ he said, ‘who do you say I am?’ Then Simon Peter spoke up, ‘You are the Christ’, he said, ‘the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.’ Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

As I come to my place of prayer, I ask the Holy Spirit to help me be attentive to the encounter with the Lord in this Gospel. I read this familiar text very slowly. Perhaps there is something striking me afresh or touching me in some new way. I pause often, allowing the words to seep into my heart. It may help to try to enter into the scene imaginatively by placing myself in it. But however I approach the text, I will have to face the question sooner or later: ‘Who do you say I am?’ The disciples were confronted with it in Caesarea Philippi; I myself in my own particular place and time.

How does this question sound to me? In what tone of voice is it asked? How have I answered it in the past? How would I like to respond now? And in the future ...? Again, I ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen me. Jesus called Simon Peter ‘happy’ because the truth he spoke was revealed to him from the Father. I might like to consider times when I have felt happy – or ‘blessed’ – through being close to the truth ... even, perhaps, where this has involved some personal cost. When ready, I end my prayer in the company of the Lord, being attentive to him and paying attention to anything I feel he might be saying to me. I conclude with a slow Our Father ...

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

He will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

*First Reading*

Your faithfulness and love excel all we ever knew of you.

*Responsorial Psalm*

How rich are the depths of God! *Second Reading*

“But you, who do you say I am?” *Gospel*

*This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:*

*Isaiah 22:19–23; Psalm 137 (138); Romans 11: 33–36;*

*Matthew 16:13–20*



How does this image help me meditate on these readings?



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