



AMDG
25TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
23RD SEPTEMBER 2018



**Anyone who welcomes one of
these little children in my name, welcomes me**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.

Our readings this week explore what it means to live by the wisdom of God, where we recognise Christ Jesus not in ambition and worldly status, but rather in the helplessness of a little child.

In the *First Reading* from Wisdom, the ‘godless’ ones who live only for themselves yearn to be rid of those who live by truth and goodness. The virtuous are an unwelcome challenge to the wicked, whose cruel words recall the taunts Jesus himself suffered on the cross.

The *Psalms* reflect the confidence of one who calls on the Lord with great trust, whatever insults or difficulties they face.

In the *Second Reading*, James speaks of ‘the wisdom that comes from above’, which shows itself in peace-making and compassion, rather than in the jealousy and ambition that so often fill the human heart. We are reminded how important it is to counter our own self-seeking desires through prayer.

In the *Gospel*, Jesus takes a little child in his arms, reminding the disciples that loving service has nothing to do with the kind of worldly ‘greatness’ they’ve just been arguing about, but rather with humility and powerlessness. Christ invites us, too, to put our own needs last, welcoming him in those who may outwardly have nothing to offer.

This week, let’s ask for the wisdom to see Christ more clearly in all the ‘little ones’ we encounter, praying that in this way we might love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly, day by day.

SECOND READING JAMES 3: 16 – 4: 3

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

As I ask the Lord to help me become fully present to him, I focus my attention on becoming still, in this moment, in this place.

'Lord, what will you share with me today?'

In time I read and reread the text slowly, noticing anything that strikes me.

How do I feel ...? perhaps challenged, encouraged, hopeful, or ...?

I rest here awhile, conscious of God's loving presence with me.

St James describes some of the good things that God's 'wisdom from above' brings us: peace, kindness, compassion.

Where am I most aware of these qualities around me, and in this world?

I take time to ponder, and give thanks.

What 'seeds bearing fruit', however small, might God be inviting me to plant for him? I ask for his help in discerning them.

James reminds us that prayer itself isn't always easy to 'get right'. Perhaps I think of a time when my prayers seem to have gone unanswered, or prayer was difficult. How did I feel?

I speak to the Lord of this as openly and honestly as I can, as one friend to another, and ask for any grace I need.

When I am ready, I finish with a slow sign of the cross, asking the Holy Spirit to help me in my prayer each day.

GOSPEL MARK 9: 30–37

After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, ‘The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again’. But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’ They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all’. He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, ‘Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me’.

Conscious of the Lord’s loving presence with me, I take time to come to some inner stillness, perhaps focusing on my breathing for a while.

Now I turn slowly and prayerfully to the text. I do not need to focus on the whole passage; I simply go where I am drawn, perhaps imagining myself in part of the scene as the story unfolds, using my senses to notice details around me; watching Jesus himself ...

I may find myself on the road with the disciples, hearing their fear and uncertainty as Jesus speaks of his death; their arguments about status.

I ponder ... is there anything I am afraid to ask the Lord?

Do I relate to the disciples’ need to feel important?

Whatever comes to mind, I bring it openly to God, trusting in his unfailing compassion and love.

Or perhaps I am at the house when Jesus takes the little child into his arms.

I notice the faces around me: the child ... the disciples ... Jesus himself.

Maybe I catch his eye ... how do I feel? Taking my time, I speak to him from my heart as my trusted friend ... and listen for his response.

How might Jesus be inviting me to recognise and welcome the ‘little children’ in my own life – those without status or power; those who are helpless in any way? I ask him to show me.

In time, I gratefully take my leave. *Glory be ...*

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

But I have God for my help! The Lord upholds my life. *Psalm*

I am the light of the world, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life. *Gospel Acclamation*

If anyone wants to be first, they must make themselves last of all and servant of all. *Gospel*

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

Wisdom 2:12, 17–20; Psalm 53 (54); James 3:16 – 4:3; Mark 9: 30–37



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JESUIT
Ministries



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