



AMDG
25TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A
20TH SEPTEMBER 2020



Seek the Lord!

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.

The justice and integrity of God flow throughout the whole of creation. God's generosity knows no bounds, and sometimes – as Jesus shows us in today's parable – it is too much for human minds to comprehend. Quite simply, God's ways are not our ways.

Isaiah, in the *First Reading*, calls us to turn back and seek out the Lord. The Lord is near to us, and full of mercy and forgiveness.

The response to the *Psalms* declares that the Lord is close to all who call him. Our Lord is kind, full of compassion, and his abounding love is for the whole of creation. Such wonderful greatness cannot be measured.

Paul declares that life itself is Christ, and his evident enthusiasm encourages us to fully embrace a life centred on Christ. (*Second Reading*)

In today's *Gospel* passage, Jesus uses a parable of workers in the vineyard to challenge and stretch our thinking about those who are called to live and work for the Kingdom of God. We are all equal in God's eyes, and there is no room for human ideas of hierarchy and self-importance. The first will be last and the last will be first.

As we come to pray together, with Christ at the centre of all that we are and do, how might we live out these radical Gospel values in a world that is in so much need of the kindness and compassion of God?

May we have the grace to listen to the cry of the prophet, and to seek the Lord with all our heart, mind and spirit. In this coming week, let us pray for each other with a generous love, recognising that we are all equal as we work together in the vineyard of the Lord.

FIRST READING ISAIAH 55: 6–9

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
Call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked abandon their way,
the evil ones their thoughts.
Let them turn back to the Lord who will take pity on them,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

Recalling that I am always in the presence of God, I help my mind and body gently to become still, so that I may more easily settle to pray within the loving gaze of God.

Whatever I may notice arising within me – thoughts, feelings or senses – I place these before the Lord now, knowing that the Lord accepts and welcomes me just as I am.

I remain in silent contemplation as long as I feel drawn today.

When I am ready, I read the passage from the prophet slowly and prayerfully, pausing and reflecting on words or phrases that seem to call to my attention.

After reading the text at least once, I return to those parts of it that my heart is moved to focus on.

I ponder these words tenderly and speak to the Lord about why my heart is drawn here.

When have I felt near to the Lord in my life?

What has taken me away from the Lord?

Do I have a longing for the Lord now?

Am I being called to turn back to the Lord, who is kind and full of compassion?

Turning to the Lord now, I ask for the grace to want and choose only that which will deepen my love of God.

Glory be to the Father ...

GOSPEL MATTHEW 20: 1–16 (abridged)

Jesus said to his disciples: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, ‘You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.’ So they went. At about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing idle all day?’ ‘Because no one hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You go into my vineyard too’. In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first.’ So those who were hired last came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but grumbled at the landowner. ‘The men who came last have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day’s work in all the heat.’ He said, ‘My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous? Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.”

After first becoming as still as I can, I read the Gospel passage slowly, as many times as I need.

Perhaps I imagine being one of the workers in the parable.

How do I react when I see the latecomers being paid as much as those who have worked all day?

Does this speak to me of justice ... or of injustice?

Are there times when I want to grumble at the generosity of God?

With a spirit of loving generosity, I ask God for whatever I need to be able to live with an attitude of joyful freedom for the Kingdom of God.

I close my prayer with my own words of gratitude and by making a slow sign of the cross.

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

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

Psalm

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.

First Reading

Life to me, is Christ!

Second Reading

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

Isaiah 55: 6–9; Ps. 144 (145); Philippians 1: 20–24, 27; Matthew 20: 1–16



What am I being called to do in the vineyard of the Lord?



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