



AMDG  
26TH SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR A  
1ST OCTOBER 2017



## You must be the same as Christ Jesus

### OPENING PRAYER

O God, who manifest your almighty power  
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,  
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us  
and make those hastening to attain your promises  
heirs to the treasures of heaven.

This week's readings encourage us to try to live the values of the kingdom of God in imitation of Jesus our Lord. Although divine, he humbled himself to become one of us, even to accepting death on a cross for our salvation. He offers us forgiveness and mercy.

The prophet Ezekiel chides those who complain about the difficulty of living as God wants (*First Reading*). He invites his hearers to renounce their sinfulness. Each one who does this, although still a sinner, "shall certainly live, and shall not die".

St Paul writes to invite the Philippians to be united in their conviction and love, living for a common purpose and with a common mind; to become, in their self-effacement and consideration of others, the same as Christ Jesus (*Second Reading*).

In the *Gospel*, Jesus speaks to the religious leaders of his day with a parable that illustrates that God has no favourites, but gives mercy and forgiveness to all who acknowledge their sinfulness and, in their actions, try to follow the ways of the Kingdom. He shows that love is demonstrated more in deeds than in words.

The *Psalms* begs the Lord to teach us his ways and to enable us to walk in his truth, to remember his mercy and love for his people, rather than our sinfulness. We pray with the psalmist: "In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord".

## SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 2: 1-5

**I**f our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than your self, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus.

I begin my prayer by coming to stillness in the presence of God in whatever way is best for me; without haste, I do not rush.

When I am ready I read the words of St Paul, taking time to pause whenever a word or phrase seems to resonate, allowing its meaning to deepen for me.

I may like to ponder this reading, noticing the ways in which God has been able to deepen his life in me this past week.

I notice when I was able to

- live in harmony with others, without competition;
- think of the interests of others before, or as equal with, my own;
- for the sake of the Kingdom, become self-effacing.

For these times I give thanks to God.

I look also at those times when I felt in competition with others, needing to assert my own interests or convictions.

How do I feel now about those moments?

I ask the Lord for help, or forgiveness ... or whatever grace I need.

Looking forward to the week ahead:

where and in what ways is the Lord calling me to live the values of his Kingdom in my situation?

I talk with the Lord freely, as one friend to another.

I listen ...

I end my prayer giving thanks ... *Our Father... Thy Kingdom come ...*

## GOSPEL: MATTHEW 21: 28–32

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people, “What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, “My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not go,” but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, “Certainly, sir,” but did not go. Which of the two did the father’s will?” “The first,” they said. Jesus said to them, “I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.”

I become still and, when I am ready, slowly read this Gospel text several times, until its words are familiar to me.

I may like to try to enter the scene by becoming present in the crowd as Jesus speaks. I listen as Jesus addresses the chief priests and elders—those who felt assured of their place in the kingdom of God.

How do I react to his words?

I may like to ponder one or more of the following suggestions:

Which of the sons am I?

Perhaps I have been both at different times in my life?

How was I thinking or feeling then ...? And now?

I share my thoughts and feelings with the Lord.

How does the father of the two boys regard his sons? Does it make any difference how each behaved? I wait in stillness to listen to God.

When I look at the kingdom of God, are there any people that I would exclude?

I talk with the Lord: what does God have to say to me about these people ... and about my way of thinking?

How easy do I find it to forgive others? To forgive myself?

Finally I consider how almighty God, my loving Father, looks on me.

Am I able to rejoice in the love and forgiveness of God?

I end my prayer talking with God the Father or with Jesus, as I am drawn.

I may like to use the *Our Father: Forgive us our trespasses ...*

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

When the sinner renounces sin ...

(s)he shall certainly live, (s)he shall not die.

*First Reading*

Lord make me know your ways, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me,

for you are God my saviour.

*Responsorial Psalm*

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus.

*Second Reading*

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

*Ezekiel 18: 25–28; Psalm 24 (25); Philippians 2: 1–11;*

*Matthew 21: 28–32*



How does this image help me to pray?



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