



AMDG  
29TH SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
21ST OCTOBER 2018



**To you I call; for you will  
surely heed me, O God**

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God,  
grant that we may always conform our will to yours  
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

In today's readings, the themes of discipleship and suffering that we have been pondering in recent weeks are again repeated.

The 'Suffering Servant' text of the *First Reading* tells of the prophet Isaiah ministering to the captives in Babylon and proclaiming a message that was not well received. The servant would be rejected and suffer because of it, but through his sufferings would 'justify many'. It foreshadows the fullness of servanthood accepted by Jesus on our behalf. Through his suffering, he takes all our faults onto himself.

In the *Second Reading*, Jesus the high priest replaces the human priest of the Temple. Jesus is both priest and victim, and though without sin, he is like us in every way. By his death and resurrection he justifies us in the sight of God, and the throne of grace and mercy is opened to all. We can call on him with great confidence whenever we need help, trusting that in his humanity, he knows all that we go through, including our temptations.

The *Gospel* shows two disciples approaching this source of grace and mercy – but for their own personal gain rather than for loving service. It is the latter way that Jesus highlights as the true way, and the path he will walk as high priest.

As in today's *Psalm*, we can offer our own prayer of praise for this way, which opens to us the gifts of mercy and grace.

## SECOND READING HEBREWS 4: 14–16

**O**ur high priest is one who has been tempted in every way that we are. Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

While noting how I feel as I come to prayer, I entrust myself into the Lord's presence.

I might like to imagine myself coming before the Lord's throne, a throne of *grace*. When I am ready, I can approach it with confidence.

I can trust our high priest – for Jesus knows what it is to be human, to feel weak, to be tempted, to struggle.

This can give me great courage, if I let it.

Where I am lacking, I ask the help of the Holy Spirit.

I read the text again and again, slowly, gently, not looking for anything in particular, but simply allowing the words to touch me.

To where am I being drawn? Why?

I ponder...

I may be seeking, today, some grace from the Lord.

Perhaps I am in need of particular help.

I voice this need to the Lord, with the assurance that I shall have mercy and be given grace.

The reading asks me to cling to 'the faith I have professed', despite my struggles. Jesus, the Son of God, the high priest, *feels my weaknesses with me*.

How does this help me at the moment?

Again, I pause to ponder. What might I wish to say to this high priest?

I give what time I can, quietly resting before the Lord, sharing what is in my heart and listening to what Jesus has to say to me.

He knows me and I can trust him.

*Our Father...*

## GOSPEL MARK 10: 35–45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. ‘Master,’ they said to him, ‘we want you to do us a favour.’ He said to them, ‘What is it you want me to do for you?’ They said to him, ‘Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.’ ‘You do not know what you are asking’, Jesus said to them. ‘Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?’ They replied, ‘We can.’ Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted.’

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, ‘You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

I prepare carefully for this time of prayer. I do not rush, despite the demands that life may be making on me at the moment. I am coming into the presence of the Master; so I approach with reverence.

In my prayer I may feel drawn to the question the Lord asks of James and John – and of me too. ‘*What is it you want me to do for you?*’

What would I say to that question? Am I looking for a particular favour? I am honest with the Lord.

There may be times when I act like the two disciples, seeking what is best for me; or like the others, feeling indignant when I think someone is trying to outdo me. How does this make me feel?

I ponder this, noting anything that arises from my heart.

Now I look to the Lord and to his words. He talks, not about glory, but about a cup of suffering and of being a servant to all.

What is my cup of suffering at the moment?

In what ways do I give service to those in my life?

How do I feel now? Again, I may wish to talk to the Lord honestly.

As I come to the end of my prayer, I read the text slowly one more time, then make the sign of the cross.

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

By his sufferings shall my servant justify many. *First Reading*

May your love be upon us, O Lord,  
as we place all our hope in you. *Psalm*

Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace. *Second Reading*

What is it you want me to do for you? *Gospel*

Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant. *Gospel*

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

*Isaiah 53: 10–11; Psalm 32 (33); Hebrews 4:14–16; Mark 10: 35–45*



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