

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

May all the earth give you worship and praise, and break into song to your name, O God, Most High. *Entrance Antiphon*

My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart.
Responsorial Psalm

Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will. *Psalm 39*

Give us the strength to follow your call. *Opening Prayer*

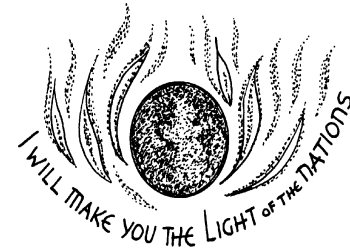
I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God. *Gospel*

My God was my strength. *First Reading*

I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. *First Reading*

REFLECTIONS

What does the week hold for me, and how do I feel God may be calling me? And ... what do I want to ask of God for myself or others?



AMDG
2ND SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME,
YEAR A, 15 JANUARY 2017

May all the earth give you worship and praise, and break into song to your name, O God, Most High.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray for the gift of peace.

Almighty and ever present Father, your watchful care reaches from end to end and orders all things in such power that even the tensions and the tragedies of sin cannot frustrate your loving plans.

Help us to embrace your will, give us the strength to follow your call, so that your truth may live in our hearts and reflect peace to those who believe in your love.

As I read this prayer, I reflect on how God's care reaches 'from end to end', embracing all that exists. I allow myself to accept that loving embrace and to marvel at God's greatness and goodness.

I am aware also of 'the tensions and tragedies of sin' and, with a deep trust that nothing can frustrate God's 'loving plans', I pray for strength to follow God's call in the depth of my being.

I read the prayer again, letting the words or phrases resonate in me and speak more deeply to my heart. I take them to God and listen to how God responds.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 49: 3, 5-6

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified'. I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the sons of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

These verses from the 'Servant Songs' of Isaiah were written during the waning days of the Babylonian exile. There was real hope of return but the exiled Jews still lived among people who worshipped strange gods. For them the God of Israel was the only true God, committed to the marginalised and the outsider.

Israel's new mandate is to be God's servant people, through whom God's salvation will reach all peoples, especially the poor and the outcast. What qualities of God does Isaiah highlight? As I read the passage, I let the words and images speak to me and touch my heart.

As I read it again I may wish to personalise it and hear the words addressed to me: 'You are my servant ... in whom I shall be glorified ...' I listen to what God is saying to me, asking of me.

The words of Isaiah are fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah, 'formed in the womb' to be God's servant and 'light of the nations'. I reflect on this and ask that my faith in Jesus may grow and deepen, so that I may become like him a bearer of light and peace to our broken world.



THE GOSPEL JOHN 1: 29-34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

I imagine the scene as John the Baptist, seeing Jesus coming towards him, recognises the 'Lamb of God' and invites his followers to 'look' at Jesus. What do the crowds see? What do I see? How do I feel? What do I say to Jesus?

In accepting Baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus identifies with wounded, suffering humankind, and is anointed as God's Servant. I remain in the scene, pondering the great mystery of salvation that is unfolding and I speak with Jesus about it.

All Christians, like Jesus, are baptised with the Holy Spirit and sent to be a light to the nations. I ponder what this means for myself, and ask that my baptismal faith may be renewed and deepened.

I may wish to pray in union with the whole Church: 'Give us the strength to follow your call.'

