



AMDG
30TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR C
27TH OCTOBER 2019



God be merciful to me, a sinner!

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.

As the end of the Church's year approaches, we renew our commitment to the Lord who desires to draw ever closer to those who are humble.

The *First Reading* shows how the Lord hears the petitions of the poor, while the *Psalms* echoes this by showing the closeness of the Lord to the broken-hearted and the downtrodden.

In the *Second Reading*, Paul encourages the new followers of Christ to hold firm to the life God gives, even through sufferings and struggles. He uses the analogy of a runner whose eyes are fixed firmly on the prize.

In all his years of ministry, Jesus rarely speaks harshly. Indeed, the only group he seems to condemn are the Pharisees, perhaps because their pride and self-reliance make them hard to reach. The Pharisee in today's *Gospel* certainly thinks he has a monopoly on God. In contrast, however, Jesus holds up the tax collector as an example, not because of what he does, but because he is sincerely asking for forgiveness. He knows his sin and his need of God, and so goes home at one with God.

This week, I endeavour to entrust myself ever more keenly to the compassion of the Lord, that it may open me more and more to his love and care. May his closeness empower me to go out to stand alongside anyone I know who is in need of help.

SECOND READING 2 TIMOTHY 4: 6–8, 16–18

My life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing.

The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me – may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I pause to become still, letting my breathing slow to a steady, even pace, as if becoming quiet after a race. I imagine myself pouring my life into the hands of the Lord. I can trust those hands.

‘The Lord stood by me’. What a line! ‘The Lord stood by me’.

I stay with this image for as long as I am moved. In my imagination, I may be able to see the Lord standing at my side, prepared to defend me.

I may recall times when I was alone, or abandoned, or – like Paul – completely deserted in my hour of need. How does it feel to think back on this?

Now I return to the Lord next to me, giving me power, staying close, letting me ‘hide in him’ (today’s Psalm). How do I feel now?

The first part of this reading (often used at funerals) talks about offering one’s life and relying on God alone – an antidote to the pride spoken about in today’s Gospel. To what extent do I see my own life as gift ... one that I may choose to spend in the service of others? Perhaps I can think of examples when I have served others, or been served.

St Paul is full of gratitude, praying even for those who abandoned him.

How grateful am I in my everyday life?

How forgiving am I to those who let me down or take me for granted?

I spend the remainder of my time in the company of the Lord who never takes me for granted, and speak to him from the heart.

I end with a slow sign of the cross.

GOSPEL LUKE 18: 9–14

Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else. ‘Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, “I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.” The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.’

As I come to pray the Gospel, I still myself, ready and eager to hear its familiar teaching. Perhaps there is a phrase I have not ‘heard’ before?

If so, I stay with it for a while.

I may be drawn to imagine the people Jesus is speaking to.

Do I know any of them? Am I one of them on occasion?

Now I turn my attention more closely to the Pharisee and the tax collector. Perhaps their different body language and ways of addressing God help me to understand them.

How do I address God myself when I pray? What does my own body language say about the way I relate to him?

I listen again to the Pharisee, and ponder whether I sometimes compare myself favourably to others, as he does. Where are the places in which I think I am due thanks from others, or from God? Do I feel offended when I am overlooked?

The humble tax collector behaves very differently. I may like to consider how important humility is in my own life ... and in society itself.

I look into my heart for anything that closes me off from God and from others, and ask for any grace I need.

I end by asking God to help me to be humble and to show me his way of seeing others and myself as I truly am.

Glory be to the Father ...

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

The Lord listens to the plea of the injured party. *First Reading*

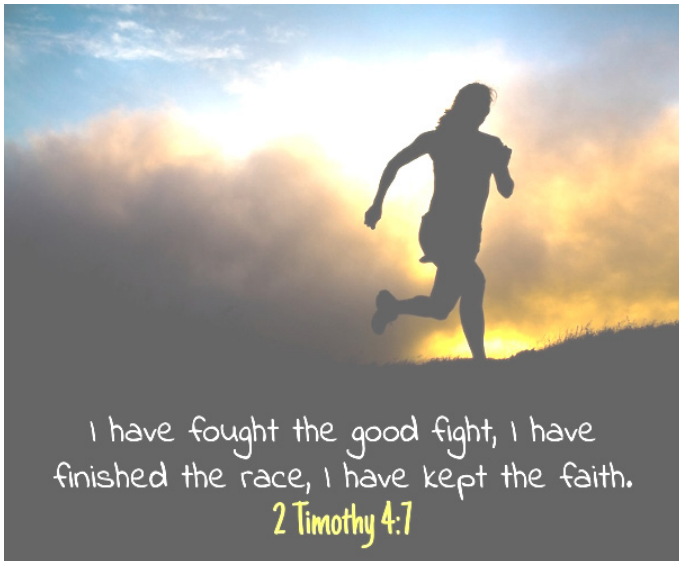
The Lord is close to the broken-hearted. *Psalm*

But the Lord stood by me. *Second Reading*

The one who humbles himself will be exalted. *Gospel*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Ecclus. 35: 12–14, 16–19; Ps. 33 (34); 2 Tim. 4: 6–8, 16–18; Luke 18: 9–14



I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith.
2 Timothy 4:7



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
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