



AMDG
33RD SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
18TH NOVEMBER 2018



‘My words will endure forever’

OPENING PRAYER

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,
the constant gladness of being devoted to you,
for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy
the author of all that is good.

As the Church’s year draws to a close, the Gospel and First Reading in particular are full of vivid imagery of the ‘End Times’. These texts were written to offer solace and encouragement to people facing temporal and spiritual crisis in very different times and circumstances.

In the *First Reading*, we listen to the prophet Daniel concluding the last of his four apocalyptic visions. He offers hope to the Jewish people, who are facing persecution from a foreign king determined to stamp out their faith.

The *Gospel* sees Jesus preparing his disciples for the troubles they will soon witness. The Evangelist is also giving a message of hope to the early church as it faces persecution from the Emperor Nero. We are reminded always to be mindful of the signs of the times; but rather than being caught up in fruitless anxiety over ‘End Times’ and the passing nature of life, we can take hope that the Word of God will endure forever.

The *Psalms* is a prayer full of confidence that God will offer healing and deliverance from death. Each verse is a prayer full of hope in God’s saving love.

In the concluding passages from the letter to the Hebrews (*Second Reading*), the Risen Christ is compared to the priests of the Old Covenant. There is no longer a need for constant animal sacrifices to atone for sin. Christ has conquered sin once and for all.

Christ is the fulfilment of God’s promise of love. His word will always be with us. Let us pray for the grace to be drawn deeper into the wonder of that love so that our lives can be a message of hope to our times.

PSALM 15 (16)

R./ Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

I go to my place of prayer and bring myself before God.
I take stock of what I notice in my body and in my mind.

I read the psalm slowly and with reverence, savouring each phrase
and letting the words and images touch my spirit.

I return to the line of the Psalm that I feel drawn to and stay with this phrase,
making it the focus of my prayer.

What do I notice arising within me as I pause and pray with these words?
I share these with God as if talking to a dear friend.

What do I notice about the relationship the psalmist has with God?

I reflect on my own relationship with God ... and ask God to draw me into an
ever more intimate relationship.

When I feel ready, I express my own words of gratitude and praise.

GOSPEL MARK 12: 38–44

Jesus said to his disciples: “In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then, too, he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

“Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.”

I prepare myself to pray by allowing my mind and body to slow down.
I take a deep breath, and allow my breathing to settle into its own soothing rhythm.

As the Church's year draws to a close, I pause and reflect back on my spiritual life over this past liturgical year.

The Church has prayed and worshipped with Mark's Gospel, and we ourselves have journeyed with the disciples as they have been drawn into a deeper understanding of Jesus's message.

I take up the Gospel text and read it slowly, imagining Jesus teaching his beloved friends. Perhaps I imagine sitting among the disciples.

I ask Jesus to teach me the deeper meaning of this message. ... I listen.

Jesus uses vivid imagery based on Old Testament texts. How does imagery such as this touch me today?

What words of Jesus never pass away for me?

What part of his message is particularly dear to me?

I share this with Jesus and thank him for his living Word.

I ask Jesus to show me how he wants me to be part of his unfolding message in the world today.

I close my prayer, saying *Glory be* ...

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

The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction.
You will call upon me, and I will answer you. *Entrance Antiphon*

To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in the Lord.
Communion Antiphon

You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence. *Psalm*

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

Daniel 12:1–3; Psalm 15 (16); Hebrews 10: 11–14, 18; Mark 13: 24–32



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