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14th Ordinary Sunday - 4 July 2021

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4 July 2021

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Jesus, returning to the place of his family and his friends, cannot perform any of the mighty works of God while in their midst. He is baffled by their lack of faith. While he continues to reach out and offer them the experience of being in the kingdom of God, they turn back to the familiar and the known. The Gospel of Mark seeks a more missionary discipleship than their complacency and asks of the reader whether we are seeking the radical changes that Jesus is asking of us.

Collect of the Sunday

Our Opening Prayer is a petition for joy. In the prayer the community, in the light of Christ's self-abasement, reflects upon God's gracious act of raising up all creation. This specifically is seen to include the rescue of humanity from servitude to sin. The petition for eternal gladness matches the rescue itself: slavery to sin would have been a permanent state without this divine intervention. The prayer is built around a number of contrasts. The abasement of the Son leads to the raising of a fallen world. The state of slavery is in contrast to that of holy joy. This joy on earth is heighten when seen in light of the coming state of eternal gladness. In the ancient sources this joy is associated most particularly with worship and devotion. Our celebrations ought to be characterized by joy!

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you give us real knowledge of the Father. Lord, have mercy.
You carry the burdens of all. Christ, have mercy.
You teach us to live in the Spirit. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Ezekiel 2:2-5

Though the people of God remain obstinate, God continues to reach out to them and places a prophet in their midst.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

For Paul, his weakness is an opportunity for the power of Christ to dwell in him and be made known.

Gospel Reading

Mark 6:1-6

Jesus, already rejected by his family, is turned away by his own home village as well. Yet he persists in his ministry as a prophet, nevertheless amazed at their lack of faith.

Reflection

Earlier in the Gospel Jesus had been rejected by his blood family. Now, some time has passed, he has been preaching, teaching in parables, collecting disciples, and exhibiting power over nature, sickness and death. He has defied convention and shown a new way of living under God. Despite all this, his return to his home is not triumphant.

The people familiar to him and his family have a moment of enlightenment but walk away from it. As Jesus preaches in the synagogue they are astonished by his mighty deeds and wisdom. But they prefer the familiar to the inbreaking and the new. They make a choice that things be the same. They seek comfort that Jesus' family are well known to them, and that he is a carpenter not a healer, not a prophet. Jesus is now rejected by his family and his hometown. Soon enough he will be rejected by his uncomprehending disciples too. For Mark, these rejections leave the divine healer powerless. Jesus mighty acts are done within a context of faith, and there is no faith amongst his neighbours or family.

This is a raw moment in a stark Gospel. As we will see in the readings for the following Sundays, Jesus will make a response. However, today we are sitting with his disappointment and frustration. He now identifies himself fully within the prophetic tradition. He has accomplished the deeds of a prophet, and he is now feeling a prophet's rejection.

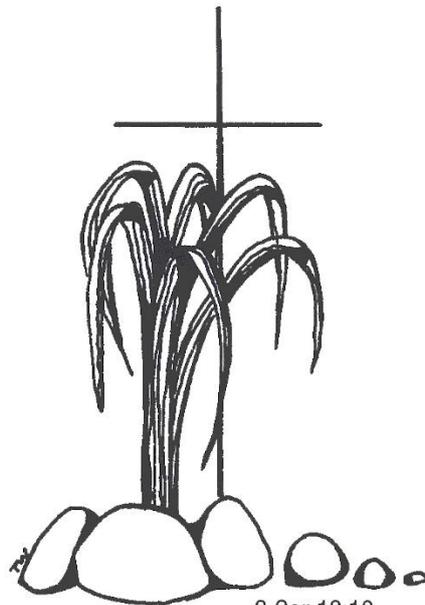
Where does that leave us the Gospel reader, the intended audience of the text? No mighty works will happen amongst us if we are like the family and neighbours. It is not that they are too familiar with Jesus, but rather that they are afraid to come out to where he is. They prefer the world as they know it. As a church, as a parish community, do we prefer the world as we know it or want it? And the message of Mark is clear: if this is the case then no mighty works of God will happen amongst us. Taking up the Gospel passages from the last few weeks, this means that no woman will come forward to be healed of her crippling maladies, no parent will ask us to restore 'life' to a young woman, no chaos will be returned to calm.

We live and worship within a wounded church. That being so, has it lost its prophetic edge? The last 12 months have faced us with environmental dangers, pandemic, mental health and domestic violence effects, loss of schooling, loss of work. We are confronting the real situation of women in our society, something so long hidden but now pushing forward. This is our reality as it is. Is it being met by a prophetic church, one of healing, acceptance, calm into chaos? Are we to be bound by our own equivalents of ritual impurity, Law closed to love, familiarity over the reign of God. With Mark, will we be at one with the rejection faced by the prophet? A rejection

based on having responded as Jesus did. There is an existential feel to the Gospel of Mark, and Jesus the prophet shows forth the meaning of God's love and the defeat of death in each moment.

The first and second readings contribute to this. The Old Testament text presages opposition as part of the life of faith. Even the very chosen people are characterized as rebellious towards God, both in the past and in the present. Yet the Lord does not give up and continues to send prophets amongst them. At the very least they will know that there has been a prophet among them. The intention of the reading is not to valorise the intransigence of the people. Rather it is to remind them that God persists with them without compromising either the divine love or the divine will. God continues to send prophets who speak to the people the ways of God despite their resistance. Similarly with Jesus, who does not change his message or approach in the face of rejection. The prophet will continue to heal, remove boundaries and reveal the challenge to love as God loves.

In a sense Paul speaks to us from the other side of the equation. He is an unrelenting and committed apostle/prophet, cognisant of the greatness of God but reminded of his own mortality. He has come to the recognition that his ailments are a source of strength. They allow him to give room for Christ to work through him, and to remember that any achievements are not his but Christ's.



2 Cor 12:10

*When I am weak,
I am strong.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

In the psalm we declare that our eyes are fixed on the Lord pleading for God's mercy. In hope of that mercy, we offer these petitions.

Petitions

We pray for the whole Church; may we, encouraged by the example of Christ and of the saints, joyfully endure suffering and hardship for the sake of the kingdom.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council. In a few months they will assemble to open themselves to the Holy Spirit to work towards decisions for the Church in Australia. May they hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in a profound way.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of Australia and the world. May they work towards finding just solutions to climate change and the distribution of vaccines and care during the continuing pandemic.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that they may find a safe and just way to live satisfying and fulfilling lives in Australia without suffering vilification or prejudice.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for all those who work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. May the leaders of this country and all those who work for their health, education and welfare be just and faithful in their dealings with them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our communities that they will care for those who are in need of help and those who are ill.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

In hope and love we bring these needs in the knowledge that they will be heard and granted through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Amazing grace. J. Newton/ Virginia Harmony. 437
Blest be the Lord. D. Schutte. 458
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ/ O. Gibbons. 495
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 496
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar. 468
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Prayer of Saint Francis. S. Temple. 490
Take Christ to the world. P. Inwood. 369
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
Tree of life. M. Haugen. 307

AOV1

Amazing grace. J. Newton/ Virginia Harmony. 29
Blest be the Lord. D. Schutte. 179
Come to me, all who labour. G. Norbert. 37
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146
Here I am, Lord. D. Schutte. 90
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H. Bonar. 54
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 28

AOV2

Prayer of Saint Francis. S. Temple. 126
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

CWB

Come to me, all who labour. Gregory Norbet OSB. 660
Lord of creation, to you be all praise! Jack Copley Winslow. 739

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound. John Newton and John Rees. 450
God has chosen me. Bernadette Farrell. 495
God has spoken by his prophets. George William Briggs. 497
Lord of creation to you be all praise. Jack Copley Winslow. 543

Additional selections by Chris deSilva

Taste and see. Stephen Dean. 609
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. The Grail. 610
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. The Grail. 611

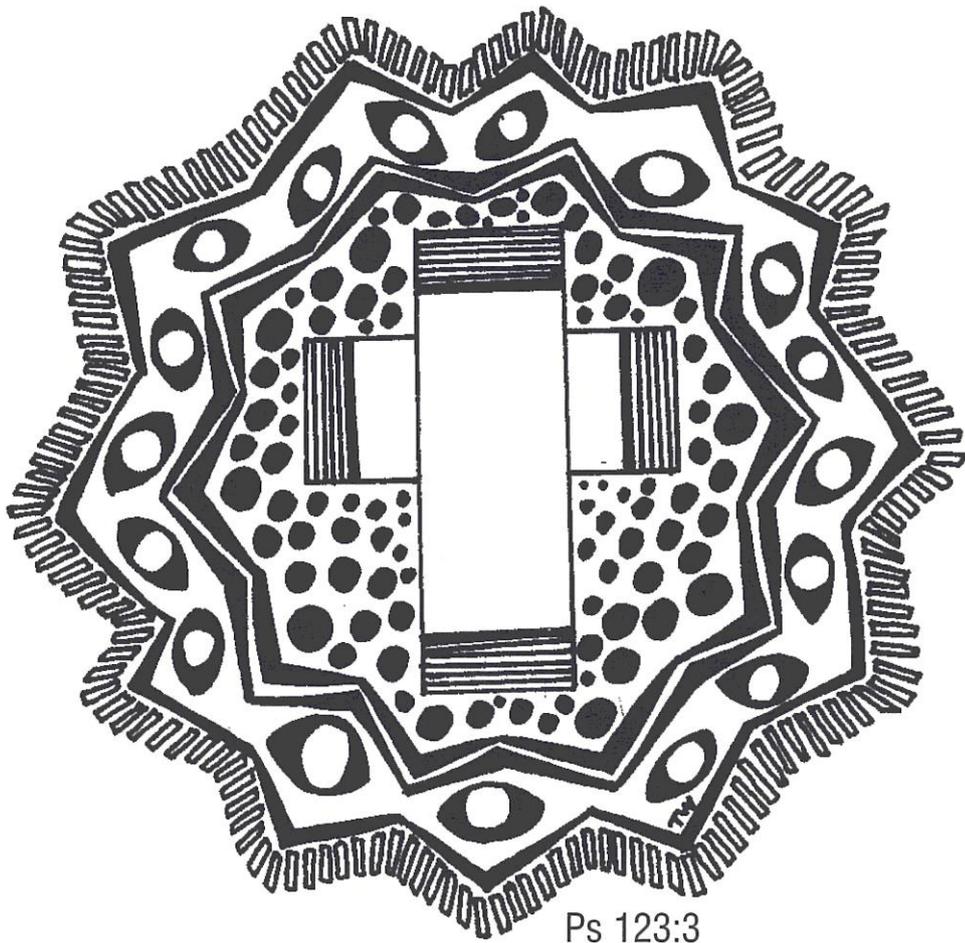
Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalms 122: *Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.*
Psalm 122: C. Alexander Peloquin/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 389
Psalm 123: *Our eyes are fixed on the Lord:* Margaret Thomas. GA 73
Psalm 123 (122): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 73
Our eyes are fixed on the Lord: Tony Alonso. LPB pg. 124

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Taste and see (FWS) [Communion]

The bread of life (SHOF) [Communion esp V 6]



Our eyes are on you God.