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## 21st Ordinary Sunday - 22 August 2021

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# 22 August 2021

## Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

### Introduction

Walk into any supermarket, and you are confronted with a sometimes bewildering array of choices. None of them are life and death. In our lives of discipleship, we are daily confronted with the challenge of following the Lord or not. Do we really believe that the message of Jesus is eternal life for us?

### Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Holy One of God. Lord, have mercy.  
You are the source of our faith. Christ, have mercy.  
You come to us as word and sacrament. Lord, have mercy.

### First Reading

**Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18**

In the covenant renewal ceremony presided over by Joshua, the people are given a choice: to follow the Lord or to serve other gods. Inspired by Joshua's example, the people do not abandon the covenant: inspired by Joshua's example, they too, elect to serve the Lord.

### Second Reading

**Ephesians 5:21-32**

At first blush, this reading can appear difficult to the modern ear with its talk of the husband being the head of his wife. A more nuanced and deeper reading uncovers the real meaning of this reading: the obligation of husbands to care for their wives as Christ cares for the Church.

### Gospel Reading

**John 6:60-69**

Today's gospel reading marks the end of our excursion into John 6 in the midst of our reading of Mark's Gospel. The comforting images of the Bread of Life have gone, to be replaced with complaints by the people of intolerable language, impossible to

accept. Yet, today's Gospel ends with a profession of faith by Peter in Christ's words of eternal life.

## Reflection

Today's First Reading comes from the very end of the Book of Joshua. The Book of Joshua picks up the story of the Israelites once they have entered the Promised Land. Much of the Book of Joshua deals with the conquest of the land of Canaan. And in the reading we have heard today, the conquest is over, and the land of Canaan now belongs to the chosen people. And it is time to renew the covenant. Time to renew that agreement between the Lord and his people. The covenant where God says, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Joshua, in what will be his last speech to his people before he dies, asks his people to make a choice. Either you are for the Lord, or you follow other gods. Now, Joshua's faith is firm. He declares, "As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord." Joshua's belief in the saving acts of God is strong. He is content, more than content, to follow the Lord.

In reply, the people declare that they, too, will follow the Lord. And they then recount the fundamental saving act of God for them, which was to bring them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. How he preserved them during their exodus in the desert, working mighty acts to preserve them all the time. And they declare, "We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

Today's gospel reading is our last one from the Gospel of John. Next week, we will return to our reading of Mark's Gospel. For the last four weeks, we have been following the story of Jesus' revelation of himself as the one sent by God and how his followers may draw life from him by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. In today's gospel, we have reached crunch time. \*Last week, it was the Jews who struggled to accept the revelation of Jesus and his teaching. This week, it is Jesus' own followers who struggle to accept this truth. And Jesus is well aware of their struggle. But he knows that even if they saw him ascend to heaven, they would not accept him or the message he taught. Because still they do not understand his words and cease to follow him. In what is perhaps one of the saddest lines in the gospels, we read, "Many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him."

When Jesus then turns to his closest companions, the Twelve, he offered them the choice. They may go or they may stay. Peter voices their response on behalf of them all. Like the Israelites when Joshua offered them the choice, the disciples choose Jesus. And it is a truly wonderful profession of faith, "Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of everlasting life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God." This choice is not based on clear and full understanding. But rather on faith and love for Jesus. Have we that same love?

*\*This refers to the passage of the gospel for the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, which would have been proclaimed last week had not the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary taken precedence.*

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

The psalmist tells us that the Lord rescues all in distress and so in faith, we place our needs before God.

## Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all the leaders of our Church. May they always choose to serve the God who has brought them salvation.

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

We pray for the leaders of the Church in Australia and the members of the Plenary Council. May they be open to the Spirit as they work for the future of the church in our country.

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

We pray for the leaders of our governments and social institutions. May the Spirit that gives life open their hearts of stone and give them the strength to lead with virtue and generosity, particularly in this time of pandemic.

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

We pray for those who struggle to live worthy lives in the workplace. Give them the strength to behave with dignity and integrity to all their colleagues.

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

We pray for all the families in our community that they may help each other to live happily by daily bringing peace and joy into their homes.

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

We pray for those who are still looking for a way to love and honour God that they will meet others on the journey who will strengthen them in their quest of peace of mind and spirit.

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

We pray for all those who are suffering bereavement from COVID-19 and separation from loved ones. May they find strength, comfort and peace through those around them.

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

## Conclusion

Loving God,

We know that the Spirit gives life and we know that through the Spirit these needs will be answered. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

### GA

Come to the feast. M. Haugen. 400  
I am the bread of life. S. Toolan RSM. 204  
Lord, to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 189  
Love divine, all loves excelling. C. Wesley/ R. Pritchard. 463  
O Christ the great foundation. S. Wesley/ S. Stone. 483  
Out of darkness. C. Walker. 504  
Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour. B. Farrell. 407  
The summons. J. Bell. 502  
Ubi caritas. Gregorian Chant. 319  
Ubi caritas. Taize. 324  
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 323

### AOV1

Come to the feast. M. Haugen. 151  
I am the bread of Life. S. Toolan RSM. 49  
Lord, to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 6  
Out of darkness. C. Walker. 134  
Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour. B. Farrell. 28

### AOV2

Though so many we are one. C. Smith. 104.

### AOV4Kids

For the journey. G. Holmes. 128  
Take and eat. M. Russell. 162  
The symbol song. G. Holmes. 112  
To live like Jesus. M. O'Brien/ D. Pudney. 160  
We live and love your word. K. Bates SM. 118

### CWB

By your priestly power, O risen Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 634  
I am the bread of life. Suzanne Toolan. 718

### CWBII

*Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions*

I love you, O my Lord most high. St. Ignatius Loyola, trans. Edward Caswall. 513  
Lord, to whom shall we go? Michael Herry FMS. 549  
Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour. Bernadette Farrell. 587  
The church's one foundation. Samuel John Stone. 614

*Additional selections by Chris deSilva*

By your priestly power, O risen Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 462

### S&S1

Taste and see. Bob Hurd. 62  
We will serve the Lord. Rory Cooney. 145  
I am the bread of life. John Michael Talbot. 153

**S&S2**

Taste and see. Steve Angrisano. 254

**Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy**

Psalm 33: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

Psalm 33: Roger Heagney. CWB 410

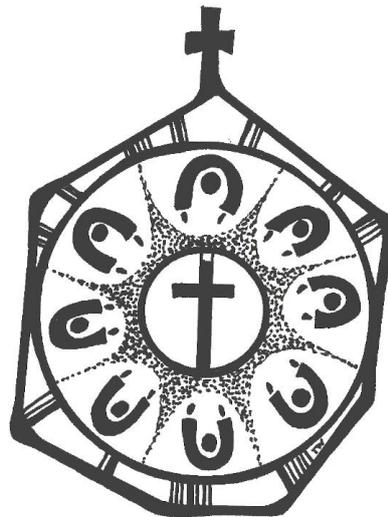
Psalm 34 (33): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 84

Taste and see: Marty Haugen. LPB pg. 141

**Music selections by Michael Mangan**

Taste and see (FWS based on Ps 34) [Gathering, Gifts]

Your words (FWS) [Gifts]



**The mystery of love  
applies to Christ  
and the Church.**

Eph 5:32