

20-5-2021

25th Ordinary Sunday - 19 September 2021

Anthony Doran

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Recommended Citation

Doran, Anthony. "25th Ordinary Sunday - 19 September 2021." *Pastoral Liturgy* 51, no. 3 (2021): 1-6.
<https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol51/iss3/24>

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19 September 2021

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

There seems to be nothing more lonely than to stand in the face of opposition and trial, when you know that you are on the side of right and good. This is the story of Jesus in today's readings. As we pray in this Mass, how ready are we to stand always for good in the face of opposition?

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you call us to be servant of all. Lord, have mercy.
You show us how to welcome the Father. Christ, have mercy.
You teach us to love. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Today's First Reading comes from the lips of the wicked: condemning the virtuous man to a shameful death, mocking their faith along the way, deriding their faith in God.

Second Reading

James 3:16-4:3

This Sunday's reading is a reminder from James that earthly ambitions produce earthly results. Rather, we are exhorted to rely on the wisdom which comes from above which is compassionate and expresses itself in good works.

Gospel Reading

Mark 9:30-37

Today, we read the second passion prediction in Mark's Gospel, coupled with Jesus' invitation and challenge to radical discipleship and simplicity of life. Still the disciples seem slow to understand the message of Jesus.

Reflection

History is littered with examples of the unjust suffering of innocent people. Stories of how brutal and oppressive regimes use torture, both physical and emotional, on their citizens are now almost commonplace. And often the ones who are hounded most severely are the ones who speak out for justice and right. It seems that no evil regime is prepared to allow good to even exist.

And of course, there is a very good reason for this. Goodness is irritating. Yes, irritating. Like the pebble in our shoe, goodness is something that we just cannot ignore. Try as we might to walk on and ignore it, we find that after a while, we must stop, and attend to the pebble in our shoe.

Regardless of the way we live our life, goodness provokes a response in us. Most of the time, for most of us, the response which goodness provokes is positive. The example of a good person can spur us to review our lives and make an effort to improve ourselves. In our Catholic tradition, the saints stand as just these sorts of examples who inspire us to do better.

But good can also provoke a negative reaction. We see such a reaction in today's First Reading from the Book of Wisdom. The Book of Wisdom is a collection of poetic sayings and reflections on the gift of God's wisdom and the necessity of seeking God's wisdom. But the author of the Book of Wisdom also reflects on the unjust or the godless man. How the man who ignores the wisdom of God lives his life.

In the reading we hear today, the godless man is irritated by the virtuous man. And the godless man is bent on the death of the righteous man, "Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life...Let us condemn him to a shameful death." The virtue of the righteous man irritates the godless man. Rather than use the encounter with the virtuous man as an opportunity to turn away from sinfulness and back towards God, the godless man, in words that are quite chilling, contemplates the fate of the just man, "Let us observe what kind of end he himself will have. If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies. Let us condemn him to a shameful death says the godless man, since he will be looked after – we have his word for it."

In today's Gospel reading, we hear the second of Jesus' predictions of his Passion and Death in Mark's Gospel. Last week, we heard the first of these Passion predictions in Mark's Gospel. That first prediction of the Passion came just after Peter's profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi. There, Peter professed that Jesus is the Christ. And immediately after this profession of faith, Jesus tells his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer, be put to death, and after three days, rise again. In the second of these predictions of the Passion, which we have just heard, the details are much the same, "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again."

But the disciples do not understand what Jesus is talking about. If Jesus were to die, that would be the death of a just man. How can a death like that herald the glorious

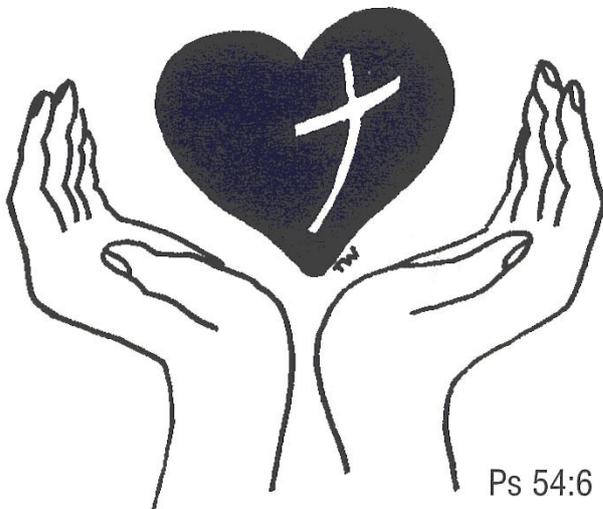
coming of the Kingdom of God? The disciples are still caught up in ideas about an earthly kingdom. Indeed, this is what they had been arguing about on the road. About which of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God.

Then Jesus calls his disciples to him and sits in their midst, as the rabbis would have done. And just as the rabbis would have done, Jesus begins to teach them. He teaches them a little more about the Kingdom of God.

In this kingdom of God, the first places are reserved for those who make themselves last. The masters in this Kingdom are the ones who serve.

And this, of course, is dangerous talk. Highly subversive. Revolutionary even. It runs counter to the ways of the world. It upsets the established order of things. To proclaim such a message is to invite sarcasm and contempt. Moreover, to practice such a doctrine is to become a nuisance. Like the virtuous man in the First Reading, to live like this is to make enemies who would see you dead.

Will you join the revolution?



Ps 54:6

I offer you
a willing
sacrifice.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

In today's second reading St James reminds us of the importance of praying for our needs, and not for things that will cause us to indulge in selfish desires. With this in mind, we pray to the Lord, trusting that our prayer will be heard and answered.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis, the servant of the servants of God, that he may be strengthened in his ministry as leader of the Church and be inspired to make the gospel message speak to the heart of those whom he meets.

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

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council and support staff as they prepare for the imminent first meeting. May they all be open to the Spirit during this important time for the Church in Australia.

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

We pray for those who govern this nation, that they may work for harmony and be true peacemakers who serve others before serving themselves.

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

We pray for those throughout the world who are suffering in the pandemic. May those who have power use it to justly work to distribute vaccine equitably between rich and poor.

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

We pray for teachers, lecturers and child care workers, that they may welcome the children with the same tenderness as Jesus and inspire them through their work to live joyfully as children of God.

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

We pray for the homeless and those on the peripheries of society, that their true value as sons and daughters of God may be recognised and appreciated by others, and that they may be a presence of Christ to those they meet.

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

We pray for the fathers, mothers, grandparents and guardians in this parish, that we may be guided by the gentle hand of God to care for those who have been entrusted to us by generously offering our knowledge, time and talents.

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

Conclusion

Loving Father, you welcomed the children that came to you through the love of your Son. Listen now to the needs of your children, and through the guiding presence of the Spirit gently lead us to your loving embrace. We ask this through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 449
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 466
For the healing of the nations. F. Kaan. 513
Gift of finest wheat. O. Westendorf/ R. Kreutz. 191
Keep in mind. L. Deiss. 391
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts. 459
On eagle's wings. M. Joncas. 452
Peace I leave with you. G. Norbet OSB. 517
Peace prayer. J. Foley SJ. 516
Prayer of Saint Francis. S. Temple. 490
The cry of the poor. J. Foley SJ. 36
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
This day God gives me. J. Quinn SJ. 536
Unless a grain of wheat. B. Farrell. 500

AOV1

Be not afraid. B. Dufford SJ. 114
Eye has not seen. M. Haugen. 146
Keep in mind. L. Deiss. 180
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts. 175
On eagle's wings. M. Joncas. 153
Shelter me, O God. B. Hurd. 140
The cry of the poor. J. Foley SJ. 83
Unless a grain of wheat. B. Farrell. 35

AOV2

Holy darkness. D. Schutte. 24
Prayer of Saint Francis. S. Temple. 126
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

CWB

Christ is the world's light. Frederick Pratt Green. 643
Lord, whose love in humble service. Albert Bayly. 741
My soul is longing for your peace. Lucien Deiss. 751
Prayer of St Francis. Sebastian Temple. 793
The church of Christ, in every age. Frederick Pratt Green. 818

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
Servant song. Richard Gillard. 461
Christ is the world's light. Fred Pratt Green. 467
Lord, whose love in humble service. Albert F. Bayly. 551
Prayer of Saint Francis. Sebastian Temple. 555
The church of Christ, in ev'ry age. Fred Pratt Green. 613
Unless a grain of wheat. Bernadette Farrell. 635
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
My soul is longing for your peace. Lucien Deiss CSSp. 559

S&S2

The Lord upholds my life. Tom Booth and Matt Maher. 259

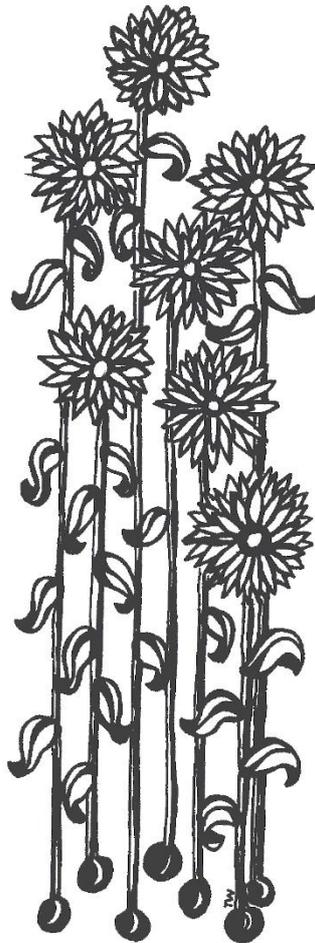
Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 53: *The Lord upholds my life.*

Psalm 53: Peter Waters. CWB 422

Psalm 54 (53): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 92

The Lord upholds my life. Tony Alonso. LPB pg. 156



**Peacemakers,
sow seeds
that bear fruit
in holiness.**

Jas 3:18