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26th Ordinary Sunday - 26 September 2021

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26 September 2021

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

The journey from death to life, for the Christian, always involves the Cross. There is no other way around it. Riches will not help us, nor will jealously guarding God's goodness. To share in the glory to which we are called, we are challenged to let all of this go.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the help of the poor. Lord, have mercy.
You save us from our sinfulness. Christ, have mercy.
You give us your Spirit. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Numbers 11:25-29

Our first reading today outlines how the leadership of the people of Israel is shared with others beyond Moses. This spirit of God is not confined by human limitation. Nor should we seek to put boundaries on the expansiveness of God's generosity.

Second Reading

James 5:1-6

Our reading from the letter of James today is a harsh condemnation of the wealthy and their reliance on riches. These earthly treasures will not save us.

Gospel Reading

Mark 9:36-43, 45, 47-48

Jesus continues to teach the disciples (and us) that true glory lies in nothing other than surrendering every vestige of prestige and power. The true glory of the Cross lies in the cup of water, offered to another.

Reflection

If the Israelites who had been delivered from slavery in Egypt and then journeyed for forty years to freedom in the Promised Land were to stand among us today, I suspect they would be surprised, perhaps even mildly amused. For unlike us who build permanent structures and systems, the Israelites had no permanent structures; certainly no churches made of brick and glass and steel. At every place they stopped along the way, they would set up the Tent of Meeting. And upon this tent, the cloud of God's presence would descend.

To share in the task of leading God's people through the desert, God told Moses to choose seventy of the elders of the people. They were to be invested as leaders at this Tent of Meeting. And when the Spirit of God came upon these elders, they prophesied.

But as we heard in today's First Reading, two of these elders, Eldad and Medad were not present at the Tent, yet they prophesied all the same. Joshua, Moses' right hand man and second in command, asks Moses to stop them. No doubt, Joshua is motivated by the best of intentions. He is seeking to protect the authority of Moses as leader of God's people. But in so doing, he has neglected the authority of God. The Spirit of God, given to the seventy elders of the people of Israel, is given as gift. And this gift of the Spirit was given as ways and means of service to the whole community. It was not a personal prerogative to be jealously guarded. For no one is left out when God shares his abundance. Moses has the answer to Joshua, "If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all." No sacred precincts can imprison the Spirit of God. The only barrier which can prevent the Spirit of God is the barrier of sin.

St James, speaking in the Second Reading, provides us with a good example of this. This section of his letter is a condemnation of the rich, and the sins of the rich. Now, it is not that riches themselves are a problem. It is the attitude that we adopt with regard to riches which shows our worldview in full light.

Now this is especially true if we think about things on the collective level rather than the individual level. How do we, as a nation, as a local community, use our riches? How do we share the riches of our nation with others? Who do we exclude or include in the Kingdom of God?

It is good for us to pause and reflect on this. Because in our world, we find that people still go hungry. Refugees are turned away from our country. Racist attitudes persist.

Not surprisingly, the Gospel Reading points us in the right direction. Following on from the Second Prediction of the Passion which we heard last week, this week's reading deals with the behaviour of the disciples in the Kingdom. And Jesus' inclusiveness is surprising, considering his condemnations in other places in the Gospel of other religious figures like the scribes and Pharisees. John the disciple,

like Joshua in the First Reading, seeks to protect the authority of Jesus. His intention is good, but his statement and his actions betray a narrow mindedness and an exclusivity that are not part of the message of salvation. We do not even know who this other person was who was casting out devils in Jesus' name. But it doesn't matter. For the lesson is obvious. Jesus' answer to the disciples reveals a little bit more of what this Kingdom of God is all about. And about how we, the potential citizens of this Kingdom, must behave. We must neither monopolise the right to do good, nor belittle the good others do, although they may not belong to the fold. To recognise who Jesus is – to profess ourselves as his subjects in the Kingdom of God – is to follow him, to walk with him, carrying his cross on the path which his Passover prepared.

It is to lose life in order to save it. It is to be a servant to all and master to none. It is to do all that we can to include people in the Kingdom, and to do nothing deliberately to shut people out. It is to prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

This is our Exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. This is our Exodus from darkness to light. This is our exodus from death to life.



Your wealth is rotting. Jas 5:2

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

St James warns the rich that miseries are coming because God listens to the poor. As People of God, poor in spirit, we confidently bring our needs to the Father.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the leaders of our Church that they will live the Law of God so that they draw others to Christ.

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

We pray for those who are working hard for the Plenary Council, members and support staff, that they may see the fruits of their work with the results in the Church in Australia.

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

We pray for the leaders of our world that they will come to know that the Law of God is above all other laws, and that only with that understanding will they be able to govern with justice and integrity, particularly in this pandemic ravaged world.

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

We pray for those who care for others who are suffering from ill health, physical and mental, so they will know how important it is for them to be compassionate and honest. *(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all people who care for children. May they understand how important this task is and work to prevent any children in their care from being abused, humiliated or damaged in any way.

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

We pray for the elderly people in our parish, whether at home or in care. May the vigour of their youth not be forgotten, and their goodness honoured.

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

We pray for our parishioners here present and those who are away, may we know in our hearts that Jesus desires us to put ourselves last and be servants to all.

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

Conclusion

Father, we bring our needs to you confident in your grace and compassion. We make this prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, your Son.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J. Quinn SJ. 495
Grant to us, O Lord. L. Deiss. 303
Lord, to whom shall we go? M. Herry. 189
Lord, you give the great commission. J. Rowthorn. 313
Out of darkness. C. Walker. 504
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Take Christ to the world. P. Inwood. 369
This is my will, my one command. J. Quinn SJ. 465

AOV1

All that is hidden. B. Farrell. 127
Lord, to whom shall we go. M. Herry. 6
Out of darkness. C. Walker. 504
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour. B. Farrell. 28
Send us as your blessing, Lord. C. Walker. 181

AOV4Kids

The Spirit lives to set us free. D. Lundy. 95

CWB

Forth in the peace of Christ we go. James Quinn SJ. 681
The spirit of God. Lucien Deiss. 832

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
The spirit of God rests upon me. Lucien Deiss, CSSp. 388
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. James Quinn SJ. 489
God has spoken by his prophets. George William Briggs. 497
Thuma mina/Send me, Lord. Traditional South African. 628
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Karen Lafferty. 594

S&S1

Your words are spirit and life. Bernadette Farrell. 56

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 18: *The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.*
Psalm 18: Roger Heagney. CWB 425
Psalm 19 (18): Jenny O'Brien. JOBB pg. 94
The precepts of the Lord: Tony Alonso LPB pg. 158

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Your words (FWS based on Ps 19) [Gifts]