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4th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 30 January 2022

Anthony Doran

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30 January 2022

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

“For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. Today’s Gospel is not actually a lesson in Newton’s third law. Following the proclamation of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazara, we too, are called to make a response. Equal and opposite? Or something else?

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came so that we can know God.

Lord, have mercy.

You were not accepted in your own country but still loved God.

Christ, have mercy.

You show us the way to live the Gospel.

Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honor you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.*

The fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time has us praying one of the most interesting collects in the entire missal. It also defies translators’ attempts to capture the original intention of the text and the audacity of its execution. The oration is a play on the Gospel imperative to love God and neighbour and retains most of the vocabulary of the text in its Vulgate Latin translation. Yet this clear reference is deliberately transformed into a prayer that petitions for us to ‘honour’ God with all our heart, soul and mind, and love all human beings with the warming love of the Holy Spirit.

The oration is from the pen of Gelasius I and was first prayed in the papal mass of Sunday January 29, 495. The pope was leading the people to reject the celebration of the ancient and traditional Roman pagan festival of Lupercalia. The festivities were marked by seduction, drunkenness and defamation. Hence the admonition to love all with true Christian love. The petition to honour, with a strong sense of worship, well reflects the need to assert that the only source of grace is Christ.

Authentic love of God requires true worship. And the reference to love that is 'true of heart' is a subtle reminder, lost in any translation, that the new Rome is founded on Peter and Paul who have displaced the mythical twins Romulus and Remus.

In effect the prayer teaches the key to inculturation: every action must be judged by its compatibility with authentic worship and by the unboundedness of its love. All commandments follow from this.

First Reading

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Today's First Reading tells the story of the call of Jeremiah. Before Jeremiah ever was, God loved him and consecrated him to be a prophet.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 70:1-6. 15. 17. R. v. 15

I will sing of your salvation.

This psalm starts as a prayer for deliverance and resolves into a prayer of trust in God's steadfast and faithful love, of which the Psalmist will sing.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Today's Second Reading is perhaps one of the most well-known sections in all of the Pauline corpus. But let not familiarity breed contempt! Let us hear with fresh ears that gifts without love are of no account, and that at the end, it is love which abides.

Gospel Reading

Luke 4:21-30

Following last week's majestic proclamation by Jesus of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, this week we see how that fulfilment is received: with astonishment, with disbelief, with rage. How do we hear Jesus' proclamation today? With these same responses?

Reflection

If you have been to a wedding at all, chances are you have heard today's Second Reading as one of the readings during the liturgy. Certainly, this has been one of the readings at just on sixty per cent of the weddings I have celebrated over my nineteen

years as a deacon and priest celebrating weddings. I counted them up on Friday! But I suspect one of the reasons that this reading is so popular is because of its mention of “love”. Couples chose this reading because they think it is about the love which they think they share.

Actually, it’s not.

The love which St Paul is talking about in the Letter to the Corinthians is not the love of husband and wife. This love which St Paul is talking about – rendered by the word *agape* in Greek – is the love of God for us, his holy people. This love is the love in which Jesus died for us and was risen from the dead.

Now, before you misunderstand me, let me make a few things clear. I do believe that all of the couples that I have married are very much in love with each other. But, in most cases, it is very young love. Those of you who are married and have been married for many years know that your relationship with your spouse has changed over the years. You know the hard work and dedication that has gone into making your relationship what it is. The first flushes of attraction and lust give way to the commitment to sharing life with children, and eventually comes to the contentment and intimacy of an old age shared together. Some years ago, I was privileged to be asked to bless a couple who were celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary. I think it is in older married couples that we come closer to seeing *agape* love. And the husband said to me that he thought one of the reasons they had lasted so long together was because they had had to face problems, and this had brought them closer together and strengthened their love. Young couples – very much in love – often have not had the grace of years together to know what love is really all about.

As Christians, we believe that all other expressions of love in the Christian life find their source in this love of God for us in Jesus Christ. As St Paul says about these other sorts of love: “Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror” (1 Cor 13:12). But the love of God is the love we will experience when we shall be seeing God face to face. When we do indeed see God face to face, we will understand what *agape* love is all about. Because when we see God face to face, we will be invited into the love which is the life of the Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit who dance together the eternal dance of God’s love.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist sings praise to God and calls on God to 'pay heed to me and save me'. We know that God will pay heed and so we bring our needs before our loving God.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and the bishops as they prepare for the Synod in 2023. May they renew themselves in the way of journeying together towards a better future for the whole Church

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

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council that they will continue to work hard in preparing the documents for the second assembly in Sydney in July.

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

We pray for the leaders of our world that they will work hard on climate change issues and be just in their support of all those who suffer from floods, sea levels rising and bushfires.

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

We pray for all those returning from holidays to work and study. May they be renewed and energised to be fruitful this year and do everything in love as Paul exhorts us to do.

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

We pray for those who suffer from domestic violence. May they find support through agencies and family that can bring them to safety and peace.

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

We pray for all those suffering in mind, body and spirit. May those who care for them bring them to a place of healing.

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

Conclusion

We offer these needs to our loving God in the sure hope and knowledge that they will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 444
Christ is made the sure foundation. J. M. Neale et. al./ H. Purcell. 482
In faith and hope and love. J. McAuley/ R. Connolly. 442
Lord, you give the great commission. J. Rowthorn/ C. Taylor. 313
Love divine, all loves excelling. C. Wesley/ R. Pritchard. 463
No greater love. M. Joncas. 460
Now thank we all our God. C. Winkworth/ J. Cruger. 425
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts/ W. Croft. 459
Take the word of God with you. J. Harrison/C. Walker. 494
The servant song. R. Gillard. 487
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476
Ubi caritas/ Where true love and charity are found. Gregorian Chant. 319
Ubi caritas. Taize Chant. 324
Where there is charity and love. R. Connolly. 323

AOV1

Gather us together. O. Alstott. 111
Now thank we all our God. C. Winkworth/ J. Cruger. 189
O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts/ W. Croft. 175
You are near. D. Schutte. 112

AOV2

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 170
The servant song. R. Gillard. 169

AOV4Kids

To live like Jesus. D. Pudney. 160

CWB

Go now, you are sent forth. Leo Watt OFM. 690
The Beatitudes. Peter Kearney. 817
The Spirit of God. Lucien Deiss. 832

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions
God has spoken by his prophets. George William Briggs. 497
In faith and hope and love. James Phillip McAuley. 520
All are welcome. Marty Haugen. 535
Where there is charity and love. Richard Connolly. 638
Where true charity is dwelling. Trans. ICEL. 639
Additional selections by Chris deSilva
The Beatitudes. Peter Kearney. 456
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. James Quinn SJ. 489
God has chosen me. Bernadette Farrell. 495
Take the word of God with you. James Harrison. 607

S&S2

God has chosen me. Bernadette Farrell. 345

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 70: *I will sing of your salvation.*

Psalm 70: J. Robert Carroll/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 360

Psalm 71 (70): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 60

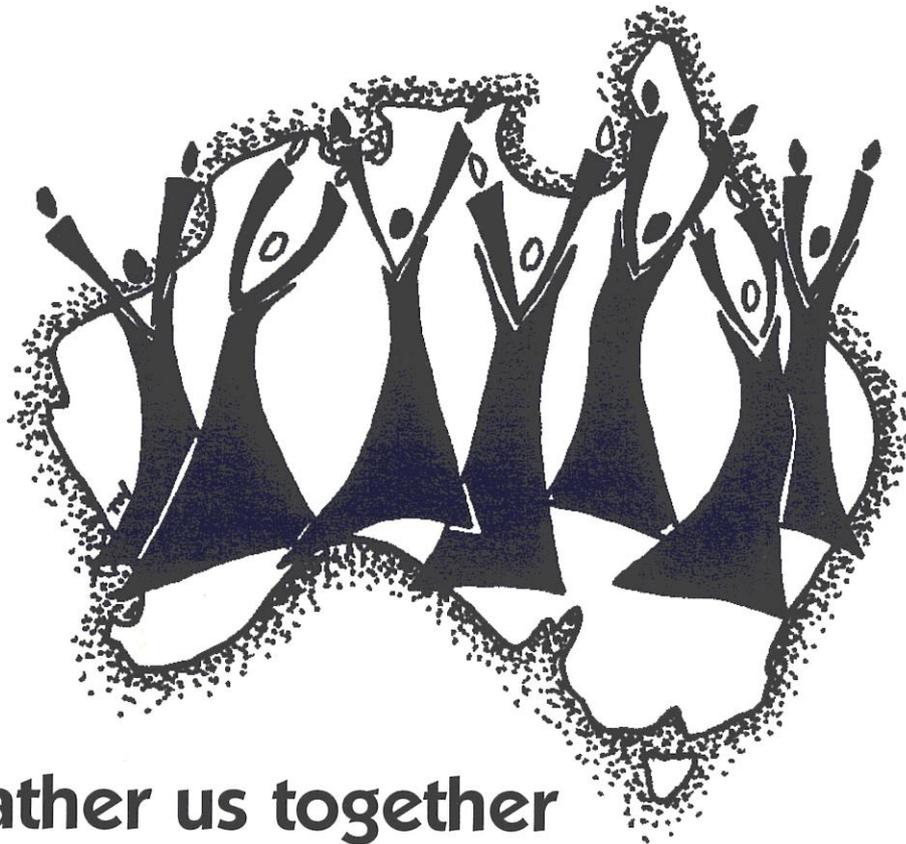
I will sing of your salvation. Tony Alonso LPC pg. 90

Music selections by Michael Mangan

The love song (SHOF) *based on 1 Cor 12* [Gifts, Reflection]

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]

Heaven shall be yours (TCS) *Beatitudes* [Communion]



**Gather us together
that we may proclaim
your holy name.**