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8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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27 February 2022

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Our readings are wisdom texts, collections of wise sayings that are short, to the point and meant to be pondered. They are also meant to match life experience and shape future behaviour. We are challenged by their sagacity, yet also intrigued as to whether these same things are all that would be said to us today.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you conquered death and so it has no more sting.
Lord, have mercy.

You are the light of the world.
Christ, have mercy.

You teach us to speak truly of God.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

*Grant to us, O Lord, we pray,
that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and that your church may rejoice,
untroubled in her devotion.*

Behind this prayer is quite a story. The ancient collect was written by Pope Vigilius (pope 537-555) for the papal Mass of Sunday 14 February 538. The siege of Rome by Witiges, king of the Arian Ostrogoths, was continuing, and an uneasy truce had been broken three times in the previous month. Not only was the siege threatening the city, but it also was disrupting the Lenten fast and the preparation of the community for the celebration of Easter.

In its original setting the sense is that the Church's worship and devotion is tranquil and untroubled when the world is at peace, established in righteousness, and freed from sin and death. Civil unrest disturbs worship and devotion and interrupts the Church's praise. The Church is able to rejoice in worship that mirrors God's own

creative and restorative tranquillity and rejoicing when there is peace in the course of worldly events. While including righteousness, the Missal tradition also understands this peace in terms of Christ's mercy, his salvation for all in need, and in terms of justice.

First Reading

Sirach 27:4-7

Sirach provides a series of wisdom sayings as markers for measuring reliability and resilience.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 92:2-3; 13-14; 15-16

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you

The psalmist calls us to give thanks as it is a good thing to do. While uttering thanks and praise to God our mind and heart can only be in one place. This reflects both the wisdom of the Ecclesiasticus reading and the call in the gospel to be true to your own heart and keep it pure.

Second Reading

1 Cor 15:54-58

Paul's meditation on the incarnation helps us comprehend that death itself is defeated.

Gospel Reading

Lk 6:39-45

This set of wisdom sayings from Jesus remind that our deeds and actions betray the state of our heart.

Reflection

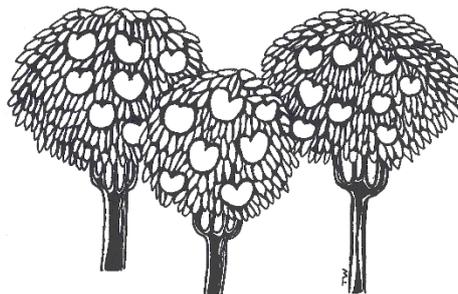
In a way there may not be a lot of commentary to offer this week. That does not mean that the readings have little to say. Rather, the first and the Gospel are wisdom texts, collections of wise sayings that are short, to the point and meant to be pondered. They are also meant to match life experience and shape future behaviour.

The sage in our passage today offers a set of wise sayings that allow us to gain a sense of reliable and resilient behaviour. Do they work today? Well, pretty well. They make sense, invite us into experience and enable us to recognise that strength comes from trial.

There is an interesting witness to the importance of language. The first lesson is at a level of moral behaviour: What we say speaks of who we are. I am not sure whether a 21st century sage would stop there, but rather feel compelled to say more. The value and role of language in our brain development is only now being studied at depth, and even that is at initial stages. As we discuss God and the Church and the life of faith, it is clear that what we say also works to open us to the mystery of God or to narrow us from the breadth of divine revelation. We are discovering that words matter, and that they shape us before we are even speaking them. Perhaps the real strength of this reading, and of the wisdom tradition texts, is both in what they say, and then in what they make us think would be said if addressed to us today, if we were the audience in our own context. We know that our speech shows the bent of our mind. We also know now that our mind is bent into shape through the speech that forms it.

The passage from Paul is a continuation of his first missive to the Corinthians. It is a meditation on the incarnation, and how by taking flesh Christ overcomes death, the enemy of flesh. Paul helps us comprehend that death itself is defeated, not so much that the body rules, but that we as fully human are now opened to the mystery of divinization: we enter into the mystery of God. The theology of divinisation is a rich tradition of the Eastern church, and a reminder that our life in God is transformative.

Luke concludes his great set piece of the preaching of Jesus with a set of wisdom sayings from the master. Jesus reminds that our deeds betray the state of our heart. While the aphorisms are salutary, they are not quite transformative! As wisdom sayings, they do not imply that we are always doomed to be the same as our actions show. The life and sacrifice of Jesus are opposite to this. But the points Jesus makes serve the community members to examine their actions, understand their consequences, and reset their lives in light of ongoing conversion. I am reminded of Pope Francis here, and his call to conversion in *Laudato Si!*



**The orchard is judged on
the quality of its fruit.**

Ecc1 27:6

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The Gospel today asks us to examine our own life, rather than judge others; and as God knows what truly fills our heart and guides us to the Truth, let us bring these prayers in faith.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis as he leads his bishops towards the Synod of 2023. May he remain strong in mind and body to bring about God's will for the Church.

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

We pray for the Church that the forgiveness and healing power of your love will strengthen its values and produce good fruit. May healing come to those who have been hurt by the Church and sadly carry their woundedness.

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

We pray for all nations of the world, that conflict and disharmony can be dissolved through compassion and goodwill. May the needs of people suffering from COVID-19 and from climate change be addressed with care and compassion.

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

We pray for those in the Defence and Police Forces, that they are protected in their duties and respected by our community, as they work to maintain law and order in our lives.

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

We pray for those in the Fire and Emergency Services in this bushfire season. May they be kept safe and unharmed in unpredictable situations, as they safeguard and protect our lives and property.

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

We pray for those who enlighten our lives in the creative arts, that they receive recognition for their contribution to our culture and society, as their work broadens our outlook and develops our understanding of each other.

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

We pray for our community as we share in the Eucharist, and acknowledge those from other cultures, backgrounds and abilities, that we can live together in an ever-growing friendship.

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

Conclusion

In gratitude for all that we have been given and in the knowledge that our prayer will be answered, we make our prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

All creatures of our God and king. W. H. Draper et. al/ Geistliche Kirchengesang. 395
(Recessional)

Alleluia! sing to Jesus. W. C. Dix/ R. H. Pritchard. 371

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 444

Make me a channel of your peace. Saint Francis of Assis/S. Temple. 490

Now thank we all our God. C. Winkworth/ J. Cruger. 425

O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts/ W. Croft. 459

Praise the Lord, you heav'ns, adore him. Psalm 148 and E. Osler/Beethoven. 409

Seek ye first the kingdom of God. K. Lafferty. 456

AOV1

Alleluia! sing to Jesus. W. C. Dix/ R. H. Pritchard. 191

Be thou my vision. E. Hull/Traditional Irish Melody. 9

O God, our help in ages past. I. Watts/ W. Croft. 175

Praise, my soul, the king of heaven H. Lyte/ J. Goss. 78

Seek ye first the kingdom of God. K. Lafferty. 48

AOV2

Centre of my life. P. Inwood. 170

Make me a channel of your peace. Saint Francis of Assis/S. Temple. 126

Praise to the Lord, the almighty. C. Winkworth/ German Chorale. 132

AOVK

Sing alleluia. M. Brown. 74

CWB

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us. Lucien Deiss. 730

Psalm 138 (139) The Hound of Heaven. Christopher Willcock SJ. 795

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

By your kingly power, O risen Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 352

As we gather at your table. Carl P. Daw. 451

Deliver us, O Lord of Truth. Herman G. Stuempfle Jr. 480

O God, refine our faith. Michael Forster. 569

Additional selections by Chris deSilva

The Hound of Heaven. Christopher Willcock SJ. 505

Keep in mind. Lucien Deiss CSSp. 530

O God, you search me and you know me. Bernadette Farrell. 572

S&S2

Purify my heart. Brian Doerksen. 307

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 91: *Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.*

Psalm 91: Kathleen Boschetti MSC. CWB 372

Psalm 92: Lord, it is good to give thanks to you: Rosalie Bonighton. GA 54

Psalm 92 (91): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 66

Lord, it is good. LPC Tony Alonso pg. 104