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15th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 10 July 2022

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10 July 2022

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

The reign of God is marked by compassion and mercy. In the eyes of Jesus, to do this is to live! Today the Bishops of Australia call us to celebrate the Apostleship of the Sea.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Word of God.
Lord, have mercy.

You teach us to love God and neighbour.
Christ, have mercy.

You draw us to the Father.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honour.

The meaning of the prayer rests in the petition that those who have made Christian profession may be kept from following errant ways. Their Christian profession is a public reckoning by which they reject their former straying from God's way, acknowledge divine truth, and are now known by the name 'Christian'. This name, however, must not only be professed but necessarily lived out appropriately. What is inimical to it must be shunned, and what is appropriate to it must be carried out. The

confidence of the baptised that God will grant their petition stems from their faith that Holy One constantly works to enable those who stray to return to the truth.

The historical and liturgical contexts of the prayer bear this out. Gelasius I (d.496), the probable author, was engaged in a polemic with Christians who publicly defended and participated in the festival of the Lupercalia. He notes with abhorrence that even though God had brought pagan Rome from its errant ways to the true path, those who now bear the name Christian were intent on taking up the pagan celebrations. For Gelasius, Christian profession involves the renunciation of sacrilegious beliefs (the power of the ancestors to bring salvation) and practices. This is lived out both through rejecting festivals and rites that are contrary to baptismal commitment and by doing what is appropriate.

In the liturgical tradition, however, the prayer has been consistently used as a collect in Easter, with its reminder of Easter baptisms present and past. This offers the possibility of a different perspective. The invocation of God's universal salvific will echoes the paschal mystery being celebrated. The image of light recalls the splendour of the resurrection through which the darkness is illuminated by the truth of Christ. It recalls Christ's triumph over all that leads to darkness, sin and perpetual death.

As the prayer stands in the Missal of Paul VI, it carries a significant ecumenical dimension. By praying for all who profess the name Christian, the collect links the local community gathered in the eucharist with the whole body of Christian believers. The oration envisions the Christian people as all those who have undertaken baptism, and who profess it with congruent behaviour. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Moses offers the foundational teaching of the entire law of God: to love the Lord with all our heart and all our mind.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 68:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37 R. cf. v 33

Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.

All our needs will be met by God's compassion and love if we but turn and follow the law which is compassion itself.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:15-20

Paul teaches that Christ is at the centre of creation, at the centre of the community of faith, and at the centre of peace, inviting us to be compassionate and merciful.

Gospel Reading

Luke 10:25-37

A question designed to entrap Jesus allows him to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan and offer us a timeless view on love of neighbour.

Reflection

Moses, the lawgiver, is revered as the greatest of the prophets. In our opening reading he is offering the foundational teaching of the entire law of God: to love the Lord with all our heart and all our mind. For Moses, this is not a far-off goal, a mysterious teaching or a quest. It is here and now present to the people, impressed in our hearts and mouths. We do not have to go to distant places to find it, but rather we need to find ourselves doing it.

The reading is placed here as an introduction to the Gospel, where the fulfilment of the Law is not found in the most challenging of quests but in discovering what is in our hearts and acting with compassion.

Our reading from Paul is an excerpt from the great hymn of thanksgiving that spans across the first chapter of Colossians and spills into the second. While there is little connection to the Gospel, it provides an interesting contrast to the narrative of the Good Samaritan. Here is the teaching of Christ at the centre of creation, at the centre of the community of faith, and at the centre of peace. This is the one who invites us to be compassionate and merciful.

While our Gospel is so well known, there are aspects that make us uneasy no matter how many times we hear it. The story line is quite simple; however, the structure and the context keep us on the back foot.

We cannot forget that the whole episode begins as a test for Jesus. It ends as a test for us! The scholar, like so many leading figures in the gospels, sets out to trick Jesus. We are unsure of the motives, but they are not based in fair mindedness or true curiosity. There is something of sneer as the Law-learned local attempts to take to task this so-called teacher from the outer regions of Galilee.

As we can see from today's first reading the question is not that hard. Perhaps the scholar was hoping to open up a discussion on the components of the many laws, and force Jesus to be identified with some fringe group or ideological camp, and thus limit the power of this teaching. However, Jesus gives that deeply biblical reply, one that is dear to the heart of all the people of Israel, one that is from Moses the greatest of the prophets. Still, in the heat of the confrontation it is often hard to come up with such good clear responses.

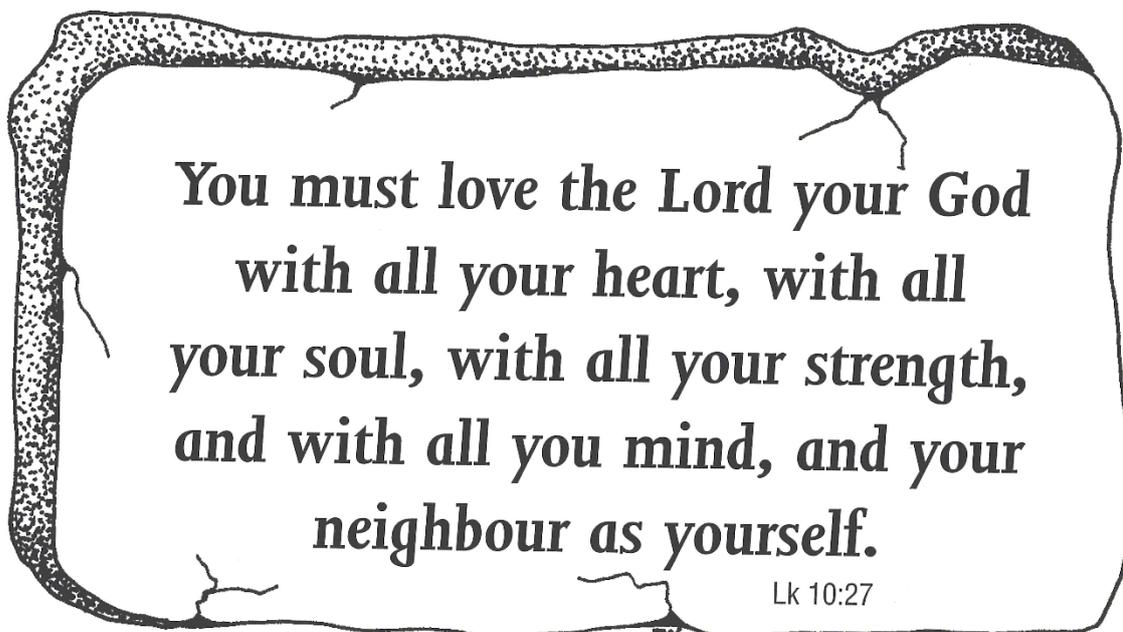
The embarrassment of the scholar does not lead to shame and silence but to bluster and cover up: the question of who is my neighbour is disingenuous. It does, however, allow for Jesus to tell one of the great stories of mercy. It is also slightly loaded. The scholar of the Law hears in the story that it is the religious officials have no compassion. The people also hear that a figure ostracised by the Law understands the suffering of the innocent and responds with kindness, generosity and commitment. He cares for the hapless traveller, pays his bills and guarantees

against further costs. The victim is not blamed, and nor does the Samaritan ask whether anyone had passed him by and left him unattended. Here we see an approach to the Law, its servants and scholars being put to the test and found wanting, all because the scholar did not have an understanding of the Law that matched that of the Galilean.

Jesus does nothing to release his accuser from his embarrassment. The story is confronting, and is followed by a precision delivered question: so who is the neighbour of the man robbed? The scholar is afforded a moment to save face, but it is truly an opportunity for conversion. Answering for all of us, he replies the one who has mercy. Caught up in the story we too are now part of the crowd, and Jesus' admonition to the listeners now includes us as hearers – go and do likewise.

I am writing this in the midst of an election campaign, a space where disingenuous questions abound. There almost seems to be a race not to care, and there is a mimicking of US political rhetoric around the shift in the sense of who is a victim. By the time you read this there will be an elected government of some stripe or another, and the bustle of leadership and its attendant posturing and politicking will go on.

Whatever the result, the missionary disciples of Jesus will need to call upon this reading as a moral compass. The reign of God is marked by compassion and mercy. In the eyes of Jesus, to do this is to live! Uninterested in who has passed by, or what they will say, our mission is to pour oil and bind wounds, offer comfort, transport, and commitment to those cast by the way. There is no false victimhood here, but attention to the suffering and ongoing guarantee towards their healing.



Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

We are called to follow God's law in our heart and as we do that, we increase in confidence to bring our needs to God.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church in Australia who have been engaged in the Plenary Council this week. May they have the openness to hear the voice of the Spirit and help us all to become a more missionary Church.

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

We pray for world leaders as the global community continues to face the challenges of war, famine, the pandemic, food insecurity and climate change. May they find ways to work together for the sake of all people.

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

We pray for those engaged in the Apostleship of the Sea. May this special ministry care for all who come by ship as workers from other lands and who truly are our neighbours.

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

We pray for all mothers and babies who are at risk of violence, poverty and neglect. May our community reach out with missionary strength and purpose to help alleviate their suffering and give them security and love.

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

We pray for those who come to our lands by sea whether as workers, refugees, asylum seekers or visitors. May they find compassion and neighbourliness in the Australian community.

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

We pray for ourselves as God's people. May we follow Christ's call for us to be missionaries in our world and not centred on our own needs. May we be full of compassion for our neighbour.

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

Conclusion

God of love and compassion, into your care we place these needs. We make this prayer through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
A family prayer			16						
A new commandment					318	615	443		
Christians, let us love one another						648	469		
For the fruits of this creation					426		488		
Lord of all nations, grant me grace							542		
Love is his word					462	743	553		
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow	10				384	710	394		
Seek, O seek the Lord					211	802	595		
The servant song		169			487		461		
This is my will, my one command					465	842	626		
Ubi caritas					324		634		
We are called to serve								139	
We live and love your word							571		
Where there is charity and love					323	863	638		
Where true love and charity are found/ Ubi Caritas et Amor			118		319		639		

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 68: *Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live.*

or

Psalm 18: *The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 68	393				pg. 116	
Psalm 18	425		pg. 78		pg.119	

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Your words (FWS) *Based on Ps 18/19* [Gifts]

Whatever we do (DOM) [Gathering, Communion]

Love God, love each other (LCC) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Gifts, Recessional]