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19th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 7 August 2022

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7 August 2022

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

The Christian life is not passive or indifferent. It is marked by active readiness, built on faith and trust, and is able to respond at any moment to the voice of Christ. This week is also Vocations Awareness Week in Australia.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you call us to a life of faith.
Lord, have mercy.

You show us the way to the Father.
Christ, have mercy.

You are life for the world.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.

This prayer is the third collect from the liturgy of Milan to be introduced into the Vatican II inspired revision of the Missal. Nevertheless, though taken from the worship of that city, it is a prayer that was also used in Rome, and probably originated from there. Besides its interesting journey amongst the ancient sources, the prayer has some features of great interest. It is one of the very, very few collects that speaks of God as 'Father'. Even more unusual is its explicit mention of the Holy

Spirit, a rarity amongst the entire genre of collects. In fact, this prayer is a restored version of the Milanese and Roman original: in the 1975 Latin Missal of Paul VI, the reference to the Holy Spirit had been expunged! However, the original prayer related the bringing of hearts to perfection through participation in worship. That original connection remains excluded from our contemporary version.

The oration is richly Pauline, inspired by Rom 8:14-17. Through the presence of the Spirit within them, the baptised are the adopted children of God, their Father. This same Spirit enables the faithful to pray to God as Father, accompanies their prayers to the Father and testifies that these are the prayers of the adopted children. Entry into the promised inheritance is associated with the perfection within them of the spirit of adoption. In the larger context of the prayer's vocabulary and references, their baptism is brought to fulfillment through pure worship, the renewal of their bodies and minds, living out the new life of baptism, and sharing in Christ's sufferings. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 18:6-9

The first reading is an excerpt from a larger script which recounts God's saving might. The magnitude of the ills that befall the Egyptians illustrates God's power, underlined further with the Lord's sparing of Israel.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32:1, 12, 18-20, 22. R. v. 12

Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Today's Psalm is a song of praise acknowledging how blessed the people of God are to be in special relationship with the Lord.

Second Reading

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 or Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-12

The second reading teaches on the importance of faith and hope using the example of Abraham and Sarah. Such faith and hope allow one to build a life on the promises of God, promises that only come to fruition as we respond and trust that which is not fully present.

Gospel Reading

Luke 12:32-48 or Luke 12:35-40

The time and place of Jesus' final coming is unknown. This is an extension of a fundamental truth that we cannot know the entirety of God's future movements. We

must not be lulled into laziness or apathy simply because we are not able to know the time and place of Jesus' coming.

Reflection

The parable told in today's Gospel reading warns of the accountability that will come with Jesus' return. The teaching is that the time or place of the end times and Jesus' return is unknowable. While we wait for the completion of all things, for the final act in the story of the salvation of all, it can seem dark and even pointless. We are not to succumb to the darkness but remain people of purpose, dressed and ready to respond to Christ at any moment. To have our 'lamps burning' providing light to the places we live. The interpretive process often extends to being prepared to respond rightly and with moral fortitude to any unforeseen events which surely come our way as we live this side of the culmination of all things.

On its own, it can all seem a bit nervous and frightening. To be 'on our guard' for the one who comes 'like a thief in the night'. To be alert and awake to anything happening at any moment. It would seem that there is no kicking back, relaxing and watching the world go by for the Christian life. Of course, such a heightened sense of alertness that some might draw from the reading needs to be tempered lest we miss the point entirely. Psychologists tell us that it is a natural and useful instinct to respond to the unknown with heightened awareness and alertness. However, it is unhealthy to remain in that 'crisis response' state for the long term. Is Jesus asking us to go against that need to live a 'normal' existence? Is Jesus suggesting that we remain tightly wound, on high alert, in crisis mode at all times, such that we never get 'caught out' and find ourselves doing the wrong thing and the wrong time?

Clearly the answer is no. Jesus does not want alertness to the point of paranoia. We know this because there is an accompanying theme that comes with today's Gospel reading. It rests on the interrelated themes of hope and trust.

The first reading is a little cryptic to our ears as there are many cross-references embedded in it. The book of Wisdom is written very late in relation to other Old Testament books, probably being written only a generation or two before the time of Christ. It appears to have a number of aims, one of which is to remind the Jews of the providential nature of God. This particular reading recounts the saving activity of God during the Exodus, where God is shown to bring 'salvation to the righteous and destruction of their foes' (v. 7). More accurately, it speaks of a 'foreknowledge' and an 'expectation' that the people of God had at the time that God would honour God's promise to be their salvation and make them a holy people based on the earlier Abrahamic covenant. Even while in bondage, they 'secretly' engaged in their devotion to God confident in the knowledge of God's salvation. When the time of deliverance came, they were ready because of their dedication to God. To put it succinctly, they were ready because they trusted the revealed nature of God and because they remained devoted to it; connected to and aware of the nature of God.

The second reading similarly is a scripture recalling earlier scripture. In this case it is going even further back than the first reading to the story of Abraham who is the champion of faith. Whose trust in God allowed him to respond obediently to leave his

familiar life behind in his hometown of Ur and take the journey to an unknown place and 'without knowing where he was going' (v. 8). Taking that line alone makes it seem that he was walking blind, but that is not entirely accurate. Rather, Abraham trusted and journeyed toward the promise of God. Though it certainly was risky, Abraham's response was not a 'fool's errand'. It was, as the Letter to the Hebrews repeats often, 'by faith' that Abraham responded.

The Psalm too speaks of a hope that the people can have because they are aware of their special relationship with the Lord. However, it finishes on an interesting note of expectation, of waiting, and of hope in God. The Psalm effectively sings; happy are we who are waiting for God to be who we trust God is.

Returning to the Gospel, it is important to note what immediately precedes today's chosen passage; that is, Luke 12:22-35 (it is partly included in the longer version of today's reading). It sits between this and last Sundays' readings. It is a pericope often titled 'Do not Worry' (NRSV) or 'Dependence on God' (NABRE). It recounts Jesus telling his followers not to worry, using the birds of the air and the flowers in the ground to remind them that God's providential care is woven into creation itself, and that God has particular concern for them beyond any other living thing. In simple terms, it is a call to trust God and not (like the Rich Man from last week's Gospel reading) trust one's own prosperity. In relation to this week's Gospel, and drawing from all the readings of today's liturgy, we use trust as a means to preparedness. It is not panicked or fearful vigilance that Jesus is demanding. It is sweet surrender; a journey of trust being offered. It is an invitation to journey as Abraham did from a place of knowing to a place of blessing.

So, yes, the life of a Christian includes being prepared for 'God's surprises' which can come at any time and in any form. However, the foundation of any preparedness is not fear or alarm. Rather, it is knowing and trusting. It is this that allows one to respond to the untimely unexpected and difficult things that come our way.



Lk 12:35

**HAVE YOUR
LAMP LIT.
BE READY.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

In trust, we turn to God with all our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, Pope Francis, and all the clergy, lay and religious leaders. May they not be driven with anxiety for particular ends but work with trust in God that what is good will be achieved.

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

We pray, during this Vocations Awareness week, that our minds and hearts will be open to the specific call that God has given each one of us. May we also be encouraging of others as they grow in understanding of their unique calling.

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

We pray for the leaders of our world. May they be given the clarity of vision to know that they are not alone in their leadership and so trust in goodness of purpose and effort.

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

We pray for parents throughout the world who are suffering because their children are suffering from war, famine, or other distresses. Give them the spirit of selflessness so that they can provide, where possible, for their children's needs. May the charitable organisations who are able to reach them be supported through great generosity of those who have abundance.

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

We pray for all those who suffer mental illness. May their anxieties and painful distress be alleviated by the good care of professional health workers and the people who love them.

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

We pray for all health workers who have helped us through the pandemic and continue to be generous and selfless. May they have confidence and trust in health organisations and work always for the good of the people they serve.

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

We pray for our own community. May those among us who struggle with life find the capacity to trust our community and reach out when help is needed.

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

Conclusion

In total trust we bring these needs to the Father through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1
Alleluia, sing to Jesus	191			371	619	449	
All people that on earth do dwell	25			533	613	448	
All things bright and beautiful			110				
City of God	57			498		453	
Come, Lord Jesus, come						234	
Come, O Jesus, come, O Lord					658		
Find us ready							109
How great thou art	94					577	
In faith and hope and love				442	722	520	
In the Lord I'll be ever thankful		109		429		522	
Love divine, all loves excelling				463	740	552	
O Christ the great foundation				483		565	
O God, our help in ages past	175			459	767	568	
We walk by faith	63			447		641	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 32: *Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 32	22		pg. 96		pg. 131	

Music selections by Michael Mangan

The bread of life (SHOF) *Based on Jn 6:35* [Communion]