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27th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 2 October 2022

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2 October 2022

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Tony Doran

Introduction

This Sunday's readings may seem like a bit of a mixed bag! We have prophetic concerns for justice, psalms of praise, advice for bishops and a reflection on the role of servants and masters! Perhaps the common thread is the challenge for all who seek to follow the Lord to do so with authenticity and integrity.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the Spirit of Power.
Lord, have mercy.

You are the Spirit of Love.
Christ, have mercy.

You are the Spirit of Self Control.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

The collect sets the relationship of the Christian people to God within the economy of human salvation, restoration, forgiveness and remission, healing and eternal fulfillment brought about in Christ. This economy is the expression of God's loving kindness and generous mercy toward sinful humanity. From the side of humanity, the oration opens onto the effects of sin. The merits of human actions outside grace

cause the conscience, and the whole inner person, to exist in fear of judgement and punishment. With no merits of their own, and dreading what they truly deserve, the faithful are hesitant to ask of God what they need. Nevertheless, Christian prayer is predicated on faith in God's salvific loving kindness and mercy. The faithful are humbly suppliant on account of their belief in God's goodness and mercy in which their sins are forgiven, their punishments waived, their prayers surpassed, and the prayers they rightly do not dare ask are made for them. True Christian prayer is an appeal to the mercy, forgiveness and generosity of God. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

In this oracle from the prophet Habakkuk, he complains that the Lord seems content to let injustice flourish in his sight. The Lord reassures the prophet that he will not be deceived: God's justice will come.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 94:1-2, 6-9. R. v. 8

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Today's psalm is a call to praise, redolent with liturgical imagery – indeed it is used in the daily Prayer of the Church. Included in today's verses is an admonition to beware of false worship, of hardened hearts, of putting God to the test.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 1:6-8. 13-14

Our readings from Paul's Letters to Timothy continues today, this time from the Second Letter to Timothy. Today's reading is an exhortation to take courage, to never be afraid to give witness to God, and to imitate the example of Paul in fidelity to the faith Timothy has received from him.

Gospel Reading

Luke 17:5-10

Today's Gospel, with Jesus' teaching on the role of servants, reflects the social world of the Gospel which knew of servants and slaves and masters. The lesson from today's reading is that Christians should not expect praise and recognition for doing those things which they are obliged to do.

Reflection

I hope you were paying attention during today's second reading because it is a standout one.

This Sunday, our second readings start coming from the Second Letter to Timothy. The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus differ from Paul's other letters. For, by and large, Paul's other letters were written to the local churches which Paul had already founded. And they were written to encourage these fledgling churches in their journey of discipleship.

1 & 2 Timothy and Titus are what scholars call the "Pastoral Epistles": not written to any churches, but rather to the pastors of these churches. And while these Pastoral Epistles were addressed to Timothy and Titus, their message is not for their eyes and ears alone. These epistles would have been read out to the local church assembly so as to be of benefit to the whole congregation. Modern scholarship has questioned whether or not these letters were actually written by Paul himself. For some the Church structures which Paul speaks about in these Letters – bishop, presbyter and deacon – come from a later date. And some, therefore, maintain that Paul could not have written them. But even if these letters were written after the death of Paul, Paul is still certainly the inspiration behind them. These letters speak with the voice of Paul. A bit like, 'what would Paul say to us were he still alive?'

Timothy was thought to be the bishop of Ephesus. And it appears he was a young man to be the leader of the Christian community there. And so Paul, in today's second reading, is encouraging Timothy not to lose heart in the face of opposition and trial: 'Fan into a flame the gift that God gave you...God's gift was not a spirit of timidity...'

While Timothy was the leader of the Christian community at Ephesus, he received the gift of the Spirit when he was baptised. I think often we forget just how great the gift is that God gives us when we are invited to share in divine life through our Baptism. Because when we are baptised, we are not just freed from slavery to the forces of sin around us, but we also carry with us the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And to carry the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to share in the life of God. This is no small thing.

Sitting here today in our parish community, separated from the Christian community at Ephesus by time and space, the message of Paul's letter to Timothy is meant for our ears and eyes, just as it was meant for that Christian community.

Just as Paul encourages the young bishop Timothy, so too, as we listen to today's second reading, should we find encouragement and challenge. We carry with us the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, we should never be afraid of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of belonging to him. For to be timid is to think we have to do this on our own.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The power of the resurrection of Jesus which we have been trusted to look after and carry within us is indeed something precious. We guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The Collect today speaks of God who in an abundance of kindness surpasses the merits and desires of those who ask. In faith then we pray for the needs of our community and the world around us.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of all Churches, that they be imbued not with a spirit of timidity, but with the Spirit of power, and love and self-control. May they be a prophetic voice in the global community.

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

We pray for all the leaders of our world and the economic structures that impact us all. May they be open to the influence of the Spirit of power, love and self-control and move towards a more just distribution of power and wealth and special care for the natural environment.

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

We pray for all those who are sick and suffering because of the damaging behaviour of others. May they be consoled and healed through the love and power of the Spirit working through those who care.

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

We pray for this assembly that we too may be imbued not with a spirit of timidity, but with the Spirit of power, love and self-control. In that Spirit may we all contribute to the Plenary Council through prayer and our interest, and journey together towards the Synod of 2023.

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

We pray for all those who have been hardened of heart and feel unable to respond to the wisdom of faith. May their hearts be opened by those who witness around them.

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

We pray for all the people who have died and those who mourn their loss. May they find comfort and peace in the perfection of God's love.

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

Conclusion

Almighty God, we offer these prayers, not from a timid heart, but in the sure knowledge that they have been heard. May they be fulfilled according to your will. We make this prayer 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	S&S2
Filled with the Spirit's power					676	385		
Firmly I believe and truly				382	677	486		
For the beauty of the earth	123			427	678	487		
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				495	681	489		
God gives his people strength					691			
God has chosen me	21			497		495		345
Holy God, we praise your name		129		411	710	504		
If today							74	268
If today you hear his voice								269
In faith and hope and love				442	722	520		
I want to walk as a child of the light						514		
Joyful, joyful we adore you						528		
Lord of all hopefulness					738	541		
Lord, whose love in humble service					741	551		
Love divine, all loves excelling					740	552		
O God, our help in ages past	175			459	767	568		
One bread, one body	129			193		579		
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow	10				788	394		
Tell out, my soul				550		213		
The Church of Christ, in every age					818	613		
We are called to serve							139	
We walk by faith	63			447		641		
We will bring your peace			69					
We will serve the Lord							145	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 94: *If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC	PM
Psalm 94	334	pg. 98	pg. 154	pg. 68

Music selections by Michael Mangan

If today you hear his voice (LCC) *Ps 94 (95)* Children's Lectionary Translation

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]