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## 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 23 October 2022

Mary Coloe

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# 23 October 2022

## Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Mary Coloe

### Introduction

Leonard Cohan sings about ‘the crack in everything’ that allows the light to get through. When I, we, can open the cracks in our lives to God, then we open a space for God’s gift of love to break in. Today is Mission Sunday so we also focus on what God is asking of us in our lives.

### Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are the mercy of the Father.  
Lord, have mercy.

You exalt the humble.  
Christ, have mercy.

You reconciled the world to God.  
Lord, have mercy.

### Collect

*The oration*

Almighty ever-living God,  
increase our faith, hope and charity,  
and make us love what you command,  
so that we may merit what you promise.

This collect is from the most ancient layer of collect prayers in the Roman Missal. Scholars think that the oration most probably comes from the Mass for Sunday, December 20, 537, and brings to a close the December fast. As such it is one of a collection of Masses from the hand of Pope Vigilius. The immediate historical context is the siege of Rome by the Arian Ostrogoths under Witiges.

The prayer is made up of a series of petitions for the gifts to live in such a way on earth so as to merit to enter eternal life. The first petition is for an increase of faith, hope and love. These three form the basis of a vigilant Christian life, lived in

expectation of the coming of Christ. They are the most permanent of all spiritual gifts and endure into eternal life. Among them, however, it is love which has primacy. Their presence in the faithful is the deepest expression of the community's response to God's forgiveness, covenant and commandments.

In conjunction with this gift, believers further ask that they love what God commands. This petition reflects both the primacy of love, and the relationship of the triad to God's covenant. The mandates themselves are directed towards love and worship of God, and love of neighbour. Love for them unites the community in heart and will, and is, as well, an experience of the true joys of heaven.

The pair of petitions for the divine gifts of faith, hope and love, and for the love of what God commands, together connote a life lived in love, worship, obedience, righteousness and unity. Through such a life, itself a foretaste of eternal life, the faithful seek to merit entry to the fullness of the divine promises. (Gerard Moore)

## **First Reading**

**Sirach 35:12-14, 16-19**

Leonard Cohan sings about 'the crack in everything' that allows the light to get through. When I, we, can open the cracks in our lives to God, then we open a space for God's gift of love to break in.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

**Psalm 32:2-3, 17-19, 23. R. v. 7**

*The Lord hears the cry of the poor.*

The Psalm asserts Israel's faith in God, as the one who is on the side of the lowly.

## **Second Reading**

**2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18**

As Paul faces his own death he reflects on his life and shares this with his friend Timothy. What would you share with a friend, as you look back on your life?

## **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 18:9-14**

The gospel compares two very different people in Jesus' first century world. God's wisdom is unlike ours and the tax collector returned to his home justified but the Pharisee did not.

## **Reflection**

The first reading and the Gospel clearly reveal a God who takes the side of the 'little ones,' those in poverty or oppressed; those who in the eyes of a comfortable society are judged negatively. The pathos of God reaches out to hear their cries which 'pierce the clouds.' The person who sees himself/herself as having nothing worthy of merit stands before God in humility, knowing neediness. This is where all of us must stand if we dare face ourselves in truth. Then, because God is a God of compassion, when we enter into our inner souls and taste our unworthiness, then we can meet the God already present. We are assured that 'the Lord will not be slow.'

The second reading is from the end of Paul's letter to Timothy, his companion in mission. As we read or listen to it, keep in mind Paul, a real person, who is imprisoned in Rome knowing that his time is coming to an end. What would our reflections be in his situation? From Paul we get no sense of fear or despair. On the contrary his words affirm a life spent, poured out, for the God – either as a zealous Pharisee in his earlier years, or as a Christian evangelist. His words remind me of the words of Simeon, 'Now Lord, you may dismiss your servant in peace' (Luke 2:29). The sense I have is that Paul knows that he has lived his life to the full; he has recognised the gift he was given, and willingly travelled across Turkey and Greece to share his faith with others. He has done what he could, but is not boastful, as he recognises all he has is God's gift and his mission. His life has rested in the power of God, in the Lord who stood by him. Whatever happens now, his life is in the hands of God, and that is all Paul needs to know.

God has many gifts, and many missions and being a mother or father within a family, or a single person working in a business, is no less a vocation than Paul's. In many ways we too can live out our Christian faith giving witness to the gospel, perhaps not in a trial like Paul, but perhaps within a work environment which sees religion as futile. Small gestures of kindness, or care for someone in need, bears witness to God's pathos, rather than self-interest.

Occasionally in my teaching I hand out the following ticket or ask if someone wants this free ticket.



Heaven – for free! Invariably many are shocked. They laugh! Think it's a joke! They obviously don't know the Gospel. This Sunday and next, we come to the heart of the Gospel message. God offers salvation to us; it is a free and total gift of love. It is not something we earn or deserve. It is a gift. In today's parable, one person realises this. It is the social outcast, the tax collector who knows he needs God, and asks for God's mercy. The religious person in the parable has no need of God; he is striving for righteousness through his own efforts. He has no need to ask anything of God, he prays - 'I'm alright, mate.' Leonard Cohan sings about 'the crack in everything' that allows the light to get through. When I, we, can open the cracks in our lives to God, then we open a space for God's gift of love to break in.

The Pharisee exemplifies an early heresy in the Church put forward by a man called Pelagius. Like the Pharisee in this parable, Pelagius placed great importance on doing good deeds and thereby being right before God. The Church condemned his teaching as false for this attitude does away with the need for God and for God's offer of Salvation in Jesus. We don't save ourselves. No number of Masses, Rosaries, Novenas or indulgences can achieve salvation for us. When I put this to my students, they often ask, 'Well, why do these things?' When someone gives us something wonderful, far beyond our hopes and dreams, the usual response is one of deep gratitude. When I hand out tickets to heaven, the recipients automatically say 'Thank-you.' This is why we pray, and act generously; our entire life is living out 'Thank-you' to the God who has already given us the gift of Jesus for our Salvation.

As we, like the Christians of Luke's community, get on with our lives in the world, we too need to come before God in prayer, knowing our emptiness, our poverty and open to receive the blessings that God wishes to give us. Then, like Paul, when we look back on our life we can do so with a sense of satisfaction – 'I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish' (2 Tim 4:7).



**God is close to the  
broken hearted.**

Ps 34:18

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

The psalm asserts that God is on the side of the lowly. In our lowliness we humbly offer our petitions.

## Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, particularly Pope Francis, as he leads us towards a more missionary focus. We pray for all leaders, clergy, religious and lay, that they will heed the call and lead us in a more Christ-centred and missionary way.

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

We pray for the leaders of our nation that they will come to recognise that we have much to offer in Australia to those who need a new place to call home.

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

We pray for our global leaders in politics and the world economy that they will seriously consider how to help the millions of people who do not have the basic needs for human life.

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

We pray for Australian communities of faith that they not be afraid to profess their faith and be missionaries in their own land.

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

We pray for all those who work in missionary organisations. May they be strengthened by our prayers and by our generosity in supporting their work.

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

We pray for all those who are suffering particularly in the care of missionaries. May they find solace and comfort through the kindness and sincerity of those who care for them.

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

## Conclusion

Knowing that God is full of compassion and mercy, in our nothingness we bring these needs of ourselves and our world through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	GA	CWB	CWBII
All creatures of our God and king				395	618	446
Amazing grace	29			437		450
Come down, O love divine	118			375	653	381
Come to me				471		
Come to me, all you who labour (Anon.)					662	470
Come to me, all who labour (Norbet)	37			228	660	
Gather us in						501
Gift of finest wheat				191	685	651
God of mercy and compassion				302	692	290
Humbly we adore thee					709	507
My soul is longing for your peace				519	751	559
O breathe on me, O breath of God				432	758	564
O bless the Lord, my soul					757	
O God, your people gather					768	574
O Lord, hear my prayer	17			17		
Our Father, we have wandered					784	297
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow	10			384	788	394
Praise my soul, the king of heaven	78				789	588
Praise to the Lord		132			792	586
The cry of the poor	36			83		618
There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord						82
Turn our sadness upside down			125			
What a friend we have in Jesus			117			
What does the Lord require?						642

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

**Psalm 32: *The Lord hears the cry of the poor.***

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 32	438	pg. 102	pg. 165

## Music selections by Michael Mangan

**Taste and See (FWS) *Based on Ps 33/34* [Gifts, Communion]**