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## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Australia Day) - 26 January 2025

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# 26 January 2025

## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Australia Day

Reflection by Angela McCarthy

### Introduction

As we begin the reading of Luke's gospel for this Year C in Ordinary Time, we have a moment to reflect on the nature of this Gospel. Luke declares that he is giving an ordered account of eye witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. Ordinary time is different to the big feasts as it gives us the gospel in semi-continuous way, an ordered way. In this ordered way we find the message of the gospel being unfolded for us. Today we also celebrate Australia Day.

### Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you came to bring good news to the poor. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to proclaim liberty to captives. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. Lord, have mercy.

### Collect

*Almighty ever-living God,  
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,  
that in the name of your beloved Son  
we may abound in good works.*

It is no accident that this oration is prayed in the first month of the year. Its seventh century origins lay in sets of Mass prayers for the days after Christmas, and especially those around the incoming of the new year. The Christmas context heightened the sense of God's 'good pleasure' in the incarnation as a central act in the mystery of the divine saving will. Further, the new year conjured up associations with the pagan god Janus and the influence of old divinities and spirits. It was these, in particular, that the collect unequivocally placed under the power of the 'name' of the beloved Son. The petition that the faithful abound in good works was the church's response to the licentious cavorting that marked the Janus festivities.

Yet the prayer has another layer of meaning. The Latin text corresponds in structure, content and vocabulary to the Vulgate Latin translation of Ephesians 1:3-2:10. It speaks of the free and bounteous grace of God. It denotes the fullness of blessings that come in Christ, and the continuing power of Christ's name over every situation and evil. In this it calls the faithful to abound in good works, works which correspond to the blessings of God, are worthy of the name of the beloved Son, and so pleasing

to God. On reflection this prayer provides a good test of those easily forgotten new year resolutions!

*Collect commentary by Gerard Moore: The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by me for the Canadian liturgical journal Celebrate! (Novalis Press). My thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.*

## **First Reading**

**Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10**

Following the return from exile in Babylon, the people have settled in their towns and they call on Ezra to bring the book of the Law of Moses to them. He proclaims the word of God to both men and women and all who could understand and explains it to them.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 18:8-10. 15. R Jn 6:63**

*Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.*

The psalmist proclaims the perfection of God's law and prays that our lives might win favour by following the law.

## **Second Reading**

**1 Corinthians 12:12-30**

Paul tells us that in Christ's body we all have different functions but we are all of one Spirit and in that we are all equal; there is no Jew or Greek, no slaves or citizens, we have been given one Spirit for all to drink.

## **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21**

Jesus chose to read a particular part of the Prophet Isaiah.

## **Reflection**

Today we hear the beginning of Luke's gospel where he explains his ordered account taken from the evidence of eyewitnesses. We have already heard the infancy accounts of Jesus and John the Baptist followed by Jesus' baptism so this Sunday we skip over to the second part of Chapter 4 where we hear about Jesus returning to his hometown.

Have you ever had an experience where suddenly your eyes are opened to an experience in a very particular way, an astounding way? Many parents might tell you the birth of a child is one such experience. In this account, Jesus went to Nazara (Nazareth), the town where he had been brought up by Mary and Joseph and in the synagogue he unfurled the scroll from Isaiah which he had been given to proclaim. The text also tells us that 'he found the place where it is written' and that 'the eyes of

all the synagogue were fixed on him'. Has that been our experience too? Have we heard the scriptures proclaimed in such a way that our heart is opened and ready to receive the Word? Why did Jesus choose that particular part of Isaiah? Was he exploring his own hometown's reaction to what he had chosen to be his own ministry? Is this what he understood as his Father's will? He had transfixed them all with what he proclaimed.

Likewise, in the first reading from the book of Nehemiah, Ezra the priest proclaims the word of God in the Law of Moses. This reading is used for the consecration of churches and when that happened in our parish in 1993 this reading opened my eyes and my heart. All the people, raising their hands and blessing God calling out 'Amen! Amen! Amen!' and then weeping because the whole experience was so overwhelming and beautiful. Their governor, Nehemiah, and Ezra, having read throughout the morning, and having instructed them along with the Levites, sent them off to eat the fat and drink the sweet wine and share with those who have not prepared anything. In other words, everyone is welcome at the feast. Pope Francis emphasises this for us too. In Portugal at World Youth Day in 2023 he called out 'Todos! Todos! Todos!' – everyone is welcome.

The reading from the book of Nehemiah, the psalm and the gospel all point to what we do in the Liturgy of the Word, the first half of the Mass. We listen to the story of who we are as the People of God. The Nehemiah reading is the first biblical account of a Liturgy of the Word and it was written five centuries before Jesus was born. This helps us to understand the ancient nature of how we celebrate the word of God. We still do today what our forebears did 2,500 years ago. This speaks to us of truth. What we do is true and the psalm extols how we feel about the Word. It is right. It is good. It is perfect. It is to be trusted. It is spirit and life. The early Christians continued this Jewish tradition on the sabbath and then broke the bread and shared the wine on Sunday, the day of resurrection. In time, once the Jews and Christians separated from each other, the celebration of the Word, the breaking of the bread and sharing of wine were merged into what we now celebrate as the Mass.

Jesus concludes his proclamation of Isaiah by saying that 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'. Did Jesus only mean that he would do those things? Bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind and set the downtrodden free? This year is a jubilee year. That is the biblical time to cancel debt, to set prisoners free, to uplift the downtrodden. How is this going to be fulfilled today even as we listen? It is up to us to go out as we are missioned at the end of Mass and do all of those things. There is a crisis of truth in our world today but the decrees of the Lord that we have heard today are all true and just. The command of the Lord is clear; we must go out and be Christ to the world.

Today is also Australia Day. For many of our indigenous people this is a day of distress so it is in our hands to carry the truth that we have heard here and now and to go out and be Christ to all we meet. To do that we must first acknowledge the bad news about all of our failings and those of the world around us and then open our hearts and minds to the good news that Jesus has brought to us that we **MUST** share.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

As we gather in joyful hope, singing a new song to all the earth, let us offer our petitions to God, who restores and revives all faithful hearts who seek grace and blessing.

## Petitions

We pray for the Pope, all Bishops, and other leaders in the Church. May they always be true to their calling, fruitful in the work of leading the faithful and draw all they meet to embrace the Gospel message.

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

We pray for the leaders of nations and other influential bodies in this world. May they have their eyes opened to the gift of revelation.

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

We pray for each one of us as we all form part of Christ's body. May we care for one another, sharing our joys and sorrows and uplifting each other

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

We pray for growth toward Christian unity, that the Spirit of God will help us recognise all that we hold in common as members of the Body of Christ and help us cooperate in confronting the issues of poverty, violence and neglect.

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

We pray that we may all grow in the gifts and talents the Lord has entrusted to each one of us.

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

We pray for all those suffering in the world, that Christians will proclaim liberty to captives, give blind people new sight, set the downtrodden free and proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us

## Conclusion

God of all mercy, you hear the prayers of your people and grant us the strength and courage to be faithful to the mission you have called us to live. Therefore, we make these and all our prayers through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, Our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Always on this first of days						532
As grains of wheat		153				
As the grains of wheat						194
Christ is made the sure foundation				640		482
For the journey			128			
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				681	489	495
Gather us together	111					
Gather your people, O Lord	71				490	530
Go now, you are sent forth				690	494	
God has chosen me					495	497
I am the bread of life	49			718	509	204
Lord, you give the great commission					308	313
O Christ the great foundation					565	483
One bread, one body	129				579	193
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour	28				587	407
See us, Lord, about your altar					593	
Sing a new song to the Lord		76				
Take and eat			114			
Take the word of God with you					607	494
There is one Lord						346
The Spirit of God				832	388	185
The table of God			8			
The voice of God				835	621	476
We are children of the living God			15			
We are many parts	86					523

Title	S&S2
God has chosen me	345
Isaiah 61	348
Your words, Lord, are spirit and life	248

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

**Psalm 18:** *Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC	PM1(2 <sup>nd</sup> ed)
Psalm 18	329	pg. 58	pg. 88	pg. 10

## Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)* [Gathering, Recessional]

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

One body in Christ (TWB) [Communion]

Live in the light (TWB) [Gifts, Communion]

The light of my life (TCS) [Gifts, Reflection]

**Australia Day (26 January 2025)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>AOV2</b>	<b>CWB</b>	<b>CWBII</b>	<b>GA</b>
A blessing hymn for Australia			655	
Advance Australia Fair			656	
Christ, our Lord, the Prince of Ages		644	399	
Come, Holy Ghost, Creator ,come		654	382	376
For Australia			545	
God of peace	138		546	553
Help of Christians, guard this land		711	429	
Lord of earth and all creation			545	554
Make me a channel of your peace	126	793	555	490
The Beatitudes (Kearney)		817	456	489
The Beatitudes (Russian Orthodox Chant)			563	
Veni, Creator Spiritus		851	390	373

<b>Title</b>	<b>AOVNG</b>	<b>S&amp;S2</b>
Gift of grace	49	
Lord, show us your mercy and love		265