

Sunday Readings

14th October 2018

Collect

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Wisdom 7:7-11

I prayed, and understanding was given me;
I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones;
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer,
for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand,
and beside her silver ranks as mud.
I loved her more than health or beauty,
preferred her to the light,
since her radiance never sleeps.
In her company all good things came to me,
at her hands riches not to be numbered.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 89:12-17. R/. v.14

R/. Fill us with your love that we may rejoice.

Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants. **R/.**

In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Give us joy to balance our affliction
for the years when we knew misfortune. **R/.**

Show forth your work to your servants;
let your glory shine on their children.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 4:12-13

The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts
like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip
through the place where the soul is divided from the
spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret
emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from
him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the
one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

cf. Mt 11:25

*Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL

Mark 10:2-16

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up,
knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good
master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus
said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good
but God alone. You know the commandments: You must
not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not
steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not
defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said
to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest
days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and
he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell
everything you own and give the money to the poor, and
you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'
But his face fell at these words and he went away sad,
for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard
it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of
God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but
Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them 'how hard
it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel
to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man
to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more
astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one
another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For
men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because
everything is possible for God.'

Peter took this up. 'What about us?' he asked him. 'We
have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'I tell
you solemnly, there is no one who has left house,
brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake
and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a
hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers,
children and land – not without persecutions – now in
this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord,
that, as you feed us with the nourishment
which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of
your Son, so you may make us sharers of his divine
nature. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

The word of God

Saint of the Week

Monday 15 October 2018

“Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him”

This beautiful moment occurred between Jesus and the man after the man’s declaration that he had kept all the commandments from his “earliest days”. It is a reminder to all those who have done the same that Jesus has loved them – and continues to love them – and their fidelity to his commandments throughout their lives. The man was eager to take another step in the spiritual life, and Jesus responded to his eagerness. The sadness of the man when he realized he could not do what Jesus asked indicates that all is not over – that sadness will lead him to reflect on what was asked of him and gradually to move towards a response.

There are moments in our spiritual life when the step forward is relatively easy. There are other points where the step seems enormous because it involves something of great significance to us. It may mean letting go of something that we see as part of our identity, which makes it extraordinarily hard because we have to re-think who we are. For the man who spoke to Jesus, wealth was not just about the comfort it could bring, it was part of who he had been all his life. The equivalent of his wealth in our lives may not be monetary; it may be a job, position, friendship, or home. It may even be a mission or role in which we have worked hard for God for most of our lives.

Jesus always returns to re-present the next step in a different way. If we are sad because we cannot take the step at this point in time, we can be assured that he will ask again, perhaps proposing a smaller step that will ultimately lead to the bigger step.

As the man turned away sad the question in his mind may have been “Who am I without my wealth?” It is our question too, crucial in the process of letting go: “Who am I without this?”

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer of St Teresa of Ávila

Christ has no body now, but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth, but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ looks compassion into the world.
Yours are the feet
with which Christ walks to do good.
Yours are the hands
with which Christ blesses the world.

St Teresa of Ávila (1515 - 1582)

She was born in Ávila in Spain and entered the Carmelite convent there at the age of 20, not because of any great attraction to the religious life but because it seemed the most sensible thing to do. At this time Carmelite convents were comfortable places. One was well looked after, had as much contact with the outside world as one wanted, and could keep one’s own possessions. With time, and despite ill-health, she made great progress in contemplative prayer and had a number of mystical experiences, which she treated with great suspicion since she felt that she was not nearly holy enough to be accorded them by God.

Teresa’s prayer life led her to seek a more perfect life, and in 1562, in the face of much opposition, she founded a convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Ávila. “Discalced” (“shoeless”) signified their devotion to poverty. The rest of her life is a story of the establishment of more and more Discalced Carmelite convents in the face of intense opposition from the unreformed Carmelites but help coming from the highest levels at the same time. Thus in 1566 the General of the Carmelite Order approved Teresa’s original foundation and permitted her to make new ones. In 1575 the chapter of the Order decided to dissolve them all, and for the next five years every effort was made to destroy Teresa’s reforms and many of her followers (including St John of the Cross) were imprisoned and cruelly treated.

At length, in 1580, and with the support of King Philip II, the Discalced Carmelites were made independent and St Teresa was able to found more new convents. She died, worn out by her efforts, on 15 October 1582.

St Teresa is an outstanding example of how the contemplative life can well up and overflow into action. In addition to all this, she wrote much on the subject of contemplative prayer and her writings are still standard works today. She was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

A favourite story about St Teresa illustrates the intimate relationship that the saints have with God. When she was on one of her innumerable journeys across Spain, her horse threw her as she was crossing a river. Soaked to the skin she looked up to heaven and said, “If this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few of them!” We should bring everything to God in our prayers, even our reproaches. For a reproach, in the end, is simply our way of offering up to God our incomprehension of what he is giving us.