

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But with you is found forgiveness, O God of Israel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 89)

ANTIPHON: Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

RESPONSE: Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

LECTOR: Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart. Lord, relent! Is your anger forever? Show pity to your servants. **R.**

LECTOR: 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.**

LECTOR: 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.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs! Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The rich suffer want and go hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.

Or

When the Lord appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

TODAY'S READINGS Wisdom 7:7-11; Psalm 89; Hebrews 4:12-13; Mark 10:17-30

NEXT WEEK (29th Sunday, Year B) Isaiah 53:10-11; Ps 32; Hebrews 4:14-16; Mark 10:35-45

*Yuletide cheer
with Majellan
Christmas cards*

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*To live happily
ever after*



13 October 2024 28th Sunday Year B

The fairytales and fables we heard as kids have taught us to hope that in the end, the good will be rewarded and the evil will get their comeuppance. The humble and persecuted Cinderella won the prince, while her cruel stepsisters failed to impress. Jack got his golden egg-laying goose, while the greedy giant met a sticky end. The Little Red Hen enjoyed her bread with her chicks, while the unhelpful pig, cat, and frog went hungry.

These stories instil an expectation: virtue leads to reward, and wrongdoing brings punishment. However, today's gospel challenges this notion, showing us that eternal life cannot be won solely by our best efforts.

In the gospel, both the wealthy man and Jesus' disciples believe that their strict observance of the Law or their sacrifices for the mission will guarantee them salvation. Jesus, however, disrupts their expectations. The wealthy man is told to let go of his "many possessions" (Mk 10:22), and the disciples are reminded that their rewards come with "persecutions" (Mk 10:30).

This narrative exemplifies Jesus' radical reinterpretation of God's commandments. In the Matthean "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt 5:1-7:29), Jesus redefined righteousness. It is not enough to stay one's hand from murder; one must also avoid anger (Mt 5:21-26). It is not enough to be devoted to one's friends; one must love those who persecute us as well (Mt 5:43-44). Similarly, the wealthy man of today's

gospel might live by the "letter of the law" (Mk 10:20), yet still fall short. He "went away sad" (Mk 10:22), blinded by his riches; he was unable to fully commit to Jesus.

Like a fairy tale character, this man sought a formula to earn his place in heaven (Mk 10:17). He viewed salvation as a commodity achievable by being "good." But Jesus isn't a Fairy Godmother, and eternal life isn't a magical golden egg. Salvation is a gift from God to all, whether blameless or blameworthy (Mk 10:27); it cannot be earned.

The point of this story is that the gospel is no fairytale, even though it promises a happy ending. The spectre of the Cross haunts every page of Jesus' story. The path to eternal life winds through dark days of persecution and disappointment. The happy ending can only be achieved through genuine self-sacrifice. On his final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus warns his disciples three times that he will suffer death at the hands of his enemies (Mk 8:31; 9:30; 10:32).

So, there is no secret recipe for salvation. Eternal life comes from accepting God's gift wholeheartedly, committing everything we are and own to the vocation to which God calls us. This acceptance is not a simplistic equation: be good, win salvation! To paraphrase Mark's Jesus as he set out on his final journey to Jerusalem, "if you want to live happily ever after, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34).

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