

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 114)

**ANTIPHON:** I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

**RESPONSE:** I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

Or **Alleluia!**

**LECTOR:** I love the Lord for he has heard the cry of my appeal; for he turned his ear to me in the day when I called him. **R.**

**LECTOR:** They surrounded me, the snares of death, with the anguish of the tomb; they caught me, sorrow and distress. I called on the Lord's name. O Lord my God, deliver me! **R.**

**LECTOR:** How gracious is the Lord, and just; our God has compassion. The Lord protects the simple hearts; I was helpless so he saved me. **R.**

**LECTOR:** He has kept my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! My only glory is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which crucifies the world to me and me to the world. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

Or

The chalice of blessing that we bless is a communion in the Blood of Christ; and the bread that we break is a sharing in the Body of the Lord.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Isaiah 50:5-9; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35

**NEXT WEEK** (25th Sunday of Year B) Wisdom 2:12,17-20; Psalm 53; James 3:16-4:3; Mark 9:30-37

*Yuletide cheer  
with Majellan  
Christmas  
cards*

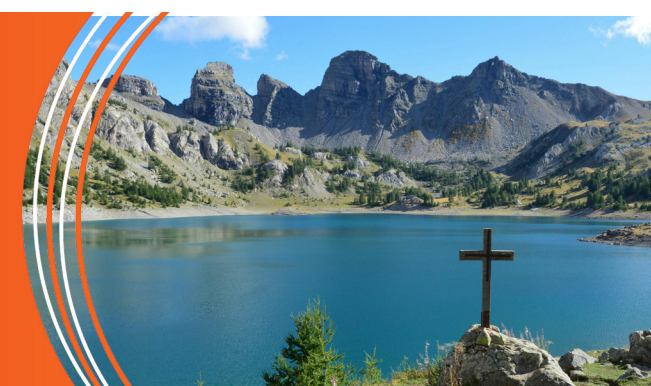
**Christmas cards**

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## Taking up our own cross



15 September 2024 24th Sunday Year B

With the reading from the Gospel of Mark (Chapter 8), we come to a turning point in Jesus' public ministry, before the journey back to Jerusalem where he will be crucified. Jesus asks his disciples: "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And then, "But who do you say that I am?"

Having witnessed his authoritative teaching, his powerful acts of healing and his wonderful miracles, Peter replies on behalf of them all: "You are the Messiah."

And how they and all of Israel longed for the coming of the Messiah. But what the disciples are slow to understand is that this is not the Messiah that they had longed for and expected. It was unimaginable for them that Jesus, as Messiah and God's Beloved Son, was to suffer and die.

Instead of commending Peter for his response, not even confirming it, Jesus instead proceeds to speak to them of his impending passion and death.

The disciples' slowness to understand, their blindness, their struggle, and their resistance to this understanding that Jesus' mission would lead to his arrest, suffering and death is starkly depicted in Mark's gospel. We see it here in Chapter 8, again in Chapter 9 and again in Chapter 10. They just don't get it!

So, as Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, journeys to Jerusalem where he will be arrested tortured and crucified, the disciples slowly

progress on a journey of coming to understand Jesus' identity and mission as the Messiah.

In our lives we too, each and every one of us, struggle in various ways to understand Jesus, our Saviour, and his role in our lives and in the world. We too often have misguided expectations of God. And we too, each one of us, are called to respond to Jesus' question: Who do you say that I am? What do I mean to you in your life?

Jesus, having explained to his disciples the suffering and death that he will soon endure, goes on to say to them that they too will also face suffering. He tells them: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." So too for us. Discipleship will inevitably require self-denial and taking up one's own cross. There's no denying it! And each one's cross is uniquely their own.

When we make the Sign of the Cross, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," we identify and mark ourselves as follower of Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One. Our cross-making in the Sign of the Cross symbolises the reality of suffering not just in Jesus' life but in our lives as his followers, not just his cross but the cross that is ours to carry in our lives. It reminds us too of the resurrection and life of the world to come.

We are not alone in our journey. Jesus is with us every step of the way.

Anne Hunt

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