

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 50)

ANTIPHON: Create a clean heart in me, O God

RESPONSE: Create a clean heart in me, O God

LECTOR: Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. **R.**

LECTOR: A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **R.**

LECTOR: Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me, that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! If you serve me, follow me, says the Lord; and where I am, my servant will also be. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

TODAY'S READINGS Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33

NEXT WEEK (Passion Palm Sunday, Year B) Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21; Philippians 2:6-11; Mark 14:1 – 15:47

*New Majellan
Prayer podcast
released*

Prayer is Life

Redemptorist priest David Hore CSSR talks about a different aspect of prayer in Majellan Media's new podcast series. He believes Prayer is Life is ideal for people of faith, or simply someone at a 'crossroads in life'. These podcasts can offer a deep reflection on how prayer can lead us to more "responsive and fulfilling lives". To listen go to: <https://majellan.media/prayer-is-life-podcast/>



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Learning to be one with Jesus



Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel **17 March, 2024 5th Sunday of Lent Year B**

How do we speak of God's commitment to us in Jesus Christ?

In today's first reading Jeremiah speaks to the Jewish people who, when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem (597BC), had lost everything they held dear: land, temple, king. Amidst their desolation Jeremiah offers his people hope: a new covenant, a new intimacy between God and his people, a new relationship with God, this one written in their very hearts, 'deep within their being.' Their past transformed by God's forgiveness, God will now be known by the least, as well as the greatest, with no one excluded.

In the second reading, the letter to the Hebrews speaks of God being with Jesus in his death, in order that Jesus might be with us. Whatever happens, Jesus doesn't give up on us. He doesn't avoid death but rather, in dying, opens himself to the One who hears his prayer and has the power to save him 'out of death.' In following him we gradually begin to realise that now nothing can separate us from the love of God. This is the new covenant written in our own hearts, our very selves.

This God is revealed in the gospel when Jesus asks not to be saved from his forthcoming death, because 'it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.' It poses the question of who might we give our lives for? Who do we live for? Our children, our families perhaps, anyone else?

We struggle with the thought of losing our lives because we fear it will mean losing everything. Jesus' image of the grain of wheat speaks to our fears and teaches us that, if we learn to let go, if we give fully of ourselves, we will yield 'a rich harvest'. In doing so, the glory of God will be revealed. This is to be the pattern of our lives.

It's not always easy, as Jesus suggests, and as we'll hear in next week's Passion. It's what the lay missionary Jean Donovan came to understand when she was urged to leave the violence of El Salvador in 1980. She refused to leave the children, 'the poor, bruised victims of this insanity.' She didn't do 'the reasonable thing.' Consequently, she and three missionary sisters (Maura Clarke, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel) were murdered by government soldiers. They died because they shared their lives with the children and their families.

As we follow Jesus ever more closely, we begin to face our fears, their hold on us loosening so we might live in a bigger world, a bigger story, to which we're all invited to be part. This is what we're doing in the Mass: learning to be at one with Jesus, 'offering our lives with him for the world's sake.' Offer our own lives? If we're for real, in doing so we enter ever more deeply into relationship with God, a relationship written in our own hearts, our very selves, forever.

Damian Coleridge
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