

We Respond

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. My heart will rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 102)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is kind and merciful.

RESPONSE: The Lord is kind and merciful.

LECTOR: My soul give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. **R.**

LECTOR: It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults. **R.**

LECTOR: As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. As a father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Whoever keeps the word of Christ, grows perfect in the love of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) I will recount all your wonders, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

Or

Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who is coming into this world.

TODAY'S READINGS Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Matthew 5:38-48

NEXT WEEK (1st Sunday Lent, Year A) Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Psalm 50; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11.

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Learn to love not hate



In an often-violent world, the call to non-violence is counter cultural. War between Russia and Ukraine has shown us the extremes of violence where missiles bring death and destruction. However, violence is not just in a distant land but present in many of our homes.

In October, the federal government, with the support of all states and territories, released a national plan to end violence against women and children within a generation. It is staggering to learn that one in three women has experienced physical violence since the age of fifteen and one in five sexual violence. Gendered violence should have no place in our society, and this ten-year strategy aims to educate and to eliminate this behaviour.

Some have used the image of two hands to symbolise the way forward with the upright hand saying, 'stop what you are doing', to the person involved in injustice or violence and the outstretched hand saying to the same person 'we need to talk'. Rejection of physical, verbal, and mental violence needs to include a willingness to dialogue and find ways of settling differences.

In the book of Leviticus, God establishes the moral and purity laws that serve to set Israel apart from other nations. God tells Moses to make the people aware that they are called to holiness just as their God is holy. This holiness takes the form of love of neighbour which calls us to purge from

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our hearts anger, resentment, hatred, and all forms of discrimination. However, these attitudes will only be overcome if we heed the words of Jesus to love our enemies, to be merciful, to forgive, and to reject violence.

Jesus also modelled non-violence by confronting injustice and violence when he challenged a group of men who accused a woman of adultery, and on the night before he died, he told Peter to put away his sword after he had struck the servant of the high priest. Jesus' non-violence is the power of love in action for the wellbeing of all.

We must stand against systemic injustice and violence not by retaliating in the same manner but with love and truth. 'Turning the other cheek' is not an invitation to passivity in the face of violence, but a way of assisting the perpetrator to begin to think about their behaviour and engage in dialogue. If we believe God loves us equally, we will work together to address racial and religious differences, oppressive gender norms, discrimination and inequality which are at the heart of violence.

The problem is that violence often begets violence so if we practised 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' we would soon have a world of sightless and toothless women and men. There are better ways to live and these better ways flow from a deep love and respect for one another.

Michael A Kelly CSsR

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