

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) All that you have done to us, O Lord, you have done with true judgement, for we have sinned against you and not obeyed your commandments. But give glory to your name and deal with us according to the bounty of your mercy.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 18)

ANTIPHON: The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

RESPONSE: The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

LECTOR: The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. **R.**

LECTOR: The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever. The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. **R.**

LECTOR: So in them your servant finds instruction; great reward is in their keeping. But who can detect all his errors? From hidden faults acquit me. **R.**

LECTOR: From presumption restrain your servant and let it not rule me. Then shall I be blameless, clean from grave sin. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Your word, O Lord, is truth: make us holy in the truth. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Remember your word to your servant, O Lord, by which you have given me hope. This is my comfort when I am brought low.

Or

By this we came to know the love of God: that Christ laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

TODAY'S READINGS Numbers 11:25-29; James 5:1-6; Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

NEXT WEEK (27th Sunday of Year B) Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 127; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16

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Not working alone but as one

29 September 2024 26th Sunday Year B

A flock of geese flying in formation is a beautiful sight. Scientists who have researched why they fly in a V-formation have discovered some fascinating details.

First, it conserves their energy. Each bird flies slightly higher than the bird in front of it. This decreases wind resistance for each bird. Second, the geese take turns at being the leader and fall back in the group when they get tired. This enables them to fly for a long time before they need to stop for a rest.

The tired geese support the group from behind and recharge themselves as they fly at a slower speed. Third, the V-formation enables them to keep track of every bird in the group, and to communicate and coordinate with the group. In fact, research has also discovered that flying in formation is so beneficial that other birds such as ducks, ibis, swans, seagulls, pelicans, and flamingos also fly in formation.

Valuing the initiative and contribution of each person at different points in their journey and drawing the best from each member in the group are also important tenets in faith communities.

In this week's gospel, Jesus discourages the disciples from preventing a man from working a miracle in his name. Jesus tells them, "You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us". Jesus thus redirects the disciples' initial focus on excluding those who may not be in their immediate circle, to emphasising the commitment to doing the will of

God: healing, teaching, and proclaiming the good news that God's love is available to everyone.

Today, we are called to embrace diversity amongst the faithful and to appreciate that the variety of our gifts and talents nourishes and enriches the entire community. Jesus speaks with great tenderness of everyone who acts in faith and good will, calling them his "little ones". He encourages us to be generous and to not exclude anyone from whole-hearted and loving service of God.

The community in Taizé, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France is a modern example of a community of faith which embraces diversity. When Brother Roger founded the community towards the end of World War Two, it initially sheltered war refugees. Taizé is now renowned for being an ecumenical community of brothers, who have created beautiful music and work for peace and justice. Currently, it comprises eighty brothers from Catholic, Anglican, Protestant traditions, from nearly thirty countries. Brother Matthew, the current prior, penned a beautiful prayer recently which describes this spirit of diversity in service:

'God the Creator, all that comes from your hands is good. Help us to discern your presence in the beauty of your creation, and to rejoice that we are a part of it. May your light shine on every corner of this earth and on every creature with which we share our common home.'

Sophie Clements

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