

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Your merciful love, O God, we have received in the midst of your temple. Your praise, O God, like your name, reaches the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with saving justice.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 122)

ANTIPHON: Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.

RESPONSE: Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy.

LECTOR: To you have I lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in the heavens: my eyes, like the eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords. **R.**

LECTOR: Like the eyes of a servant on the hand of his mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God till he show us his mercy. **R.**

LECTOR: Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. We are filled with contempt. Indeed all too full is our soul with the scorn of the rich, with the proud man's disdain. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed the man who seeks refuge in him.

Or

Come to me, all who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you, says the Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS Ezekiel 2:2-5; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Mark 6:1-6

NEXT WEEK (15th Sunday of Year B) Amos 7:12-15; Psalm 84; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:7-13

A friend
in God

Prayer is Life

In the podcast Prayer and Friendship, Redemptorist priest David Hore CSsR reflects on the wisdom of St Alphonsus Liguori and St Teresa of Avila. As Fr David eloquently puts it, "Prayer is not just a practice but a sharing of our innermost thoughts and fears with a friend who accepts us unconditionally". To listen go to [media/prayer-is-life-podcast/](#)



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Overcoming the pain of rejection



7 July 2024 14th Sunday Year B

The three main characters in today's readings suffer rejection and humiliation. Their pain is summarised in today's Psalm: "Indeed, all too full is our soul with the scorn of the rich, with the proud man's disdain."

Sometimes, following God means being a witness to people who do not respect us or our faith. As the prophet Ezekiel hears in the first reading, the task of the faithful disciple is to keep witnessing to our faith, "whether they listen or not".

In the second reading, St Paul explains how he perseveres when he is confronted with rejection and humiliation. Paul's second letter to the Church in Corinth was motivated by a vicious attack on his ministry and reputation. Some within the community, who styled themselves as 'superapostles', disparaged Paul and his teaching. Instead, they boasted about the incredible visions and secret knowledge they had received, which proved their superiority over Paul.

Instead of trying to compete with his rivals' boasting, Paul brags about his own weaknesses and failures. Paul does not go into detail about what he means by the "thorn in his flesh." Theories have included health difficulties, reoccurring temptations, or difficult people around him.

Struggles like these that seem to get in the way of us trying to live out his faith should be familiar to all of us. However, Paul explains that God sometimes allows these obstacles in our lives because our weaknesses make the grace and love of Jesus most evident.

Instead of succumbing to the temptation to

boast about his accomplishments, Paul uses his weaknesses to constantly remind himself of his dependence on God's power. Through his weaknesses, Paul learns about the self-sacrificial kind of service that God desires. As a result, God's presence and activity in Paul's life are even more present because of the weakness that appears on the surface. Paul is a better witness of God's power because he demonstrates with his life what Christ can do with any person in any situation.

Jesus himself embraces this way of living in today's gospel. Previous chapters of Mark's Gospel make Jesus seem unstoppable. Disease, demons and even death all give way before him. However, Jesus' mission appears to stall when he does not overcome Nazareth's lack of faith.

Perhaps Jesus could have forcefully displayed his power when he returned to Nazareth and broken down the barriers of unbelief. But what is a faith in God that is based on overpowering, dominating, and controlling? It would eliminate the opportunity for people to encounter God's love and mercy and for the spiritual change towards selfless love that God most desires.

Jesus most clearly proves that he is from God in his acceptance of suffering. His rejection by those closest to him is another step towards the cross, where he will demonstrate to the world and all history what God's love truly means.

Our weaknesses can invite us to deepen our loving relationship with God and invite others to encounter Jesus. Let us always.

Joseph Doyle

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