

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 145)

ANTIPHON: Praise the Lord, my soul!

RESPONSE: Praise the Lord, my soul!

LECTOR: It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R.**

LECTOR: It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord who loves the just, the Lord, who protects the stranger. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord upholds the widow and orphan, but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Or

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 35:4-7; James 2:1-5; Mark 7:31-37

NEXT WEEK (24th Sunday of Year B) Isaiah 50:5-9; Psalm 114; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35

*Yuletide cheer
with Majellan
Christmas cards*

Christmas cards

The Majellan Christmas cards are a perfect way to send a joyful message of love to those you care about. Our cards convey the true meaning of Christmas and are beautifully designed. The price per set is \$8.00 for up to 9 sets and includes postage. Details at: <https://majellan.media/product/christmas-cards-2024/>



majellan

Don't ignore the 'unworthy'



8 September 2024 23rd Sunday Year B

It's difficult not to make distinctions. Invariably, we favour some people over others. For example: we choose our friends, we choose a person to be our husband or wife, we choose 'sides' in disputes, we choose to avoid some people, and we choose to forgive some people and condemn others.

In the second reading, St James calls on believers never to make distinctions or show favour on the basis of social class, wealth, position, status or power. Everyone is to be treated equally regardless of their social background, and when it comes to worship, there are to be no seats of honour set aside for VIPs! Everyone ought to feel equally welcome and valued.

St Paul has a similar vision. In his letter to the Galatians (3:28) he declares that in virtue of baptism, "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Jesus doesn't make distinctions based on social class. In fact, the gospels portray him as having particular concern for the poor, the outcast, the voiceless, the afflicted, the vulnerable and the weak. Today's gospel is a classic example. A deaf man with a speech impediment is brought to Jesus by his friends.

In such an oral and aural culture where people were generally illiterate, not to be able to speak or hear properly was a significant disadvantage. Such people were virtually invisible. They

could not communicate, and they couldn't be communicated with, in any meaningful way. Thankfully, the man in the story is blessed to have caring friends who bring him to Jesus who has a reputation for giving new life.

Jesus gives very personal attention to the man. He takes him away from the crowd, so that they can be alone. Although the man can't hear or speak, he can experience the sense of touch, and so Jesus touches his ears, puts his fingers into them, and touches the man's tongue with his own spittle. Jesus also looks up to heaven, in prayer, for it was Jesus' relationship with God that will bring new life to the man.

It's important to remember that the man was not a Jew. The Decapolis ("ten cities") was predominantly Gentile territory. But, there's no distinction here. Jesus is the Messiah for all nations. He saw a brother in need, and in solidarity, lovingly reached out to him.

St James challenges us to 'look around' our faith community. Do we see any unhealthy favouritism? Are there people being forgotten, ignored or made to feel unwelcome? Are there voices not being heard? Are there people being discouraged from sharing their gifts and talents, or from becoming involved? Are people's contributions being devalued? Hopefully, such things are not happening; however, it's important for us all to 'keep our eyes and ears open'.

David J Hore

© Majellan Media 2024