

Twenty-Third Sunday of the Year A



Entrance Antiphon: You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love. Psalm 118:137,124

The Lord promises to be wherever two or three gather in his name. That promise is kept in a wondrous way in the Eucharist, where the whole Church gathers with the Lord present in his Word and in the Breaking of the Bread.

Lord Jesus, you died so that we might have life: Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

You share with us the victory of your resurrection. Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

You intercede for us at the right hand of the Father: Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray:

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

Ezekiel 33: 7-9

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: "Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 94: 1-2.6-9

**Response: O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

**O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.

**O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.

**O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

SECOND READING

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans

Romans 13: 8-10

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Alleluia, alleluia! Your word is truth, O Lord,
Consecrate us in the truth. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

The Lord be with you.

Matthew 18:15-20

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

I tell you solemnly whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven. I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us make our profession of faith:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offertory:

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands,
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

Prayer over the Offering:

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Preface:

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

And with your spirit.

We lift them up to the Lord.

It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours,
he humbled himself and was born of the Virgin;
by the passion of the Cross he freed us from unending death,
and by rising from the dead he gave us life eternal.

And so, with the Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The mystery of faith. **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

Communion Antiphon: **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.**

REFLECTION

'Listen to his voice. Harden not your hearts.'

From a spiritual point of view, hardness of heart is one of the worst things that can happen to anyone. To adopt a hard-hearted attitude is to maim oneself. A hard heart can't feel, can't respond, can't love. A hard heart can't experience joy. A hard heart is a closed heart. A hard heart is a barren heart. A soft heart, on the other hand, is a blessing. A soft heart can receive and can respond. It can be saddened but it can also be deliriously happy. Softened by the rain of God's grace, and warmed by the sun of his love, the human heart can be turned from a desert into a garden.

Prayer after Communion:

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Final Blessing:

The Lord be with you
May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Go forth, the Mass is ended.

And with your spirit.

Amen.

Thanks be to God.

A Prayer ... Lord, help me to remember when things seem hopeless, that you have died and risen, and will triumph through us. I would like to live always with a sense of the joy of the resurrection, but sometimes the pains and sufferings of life seem to over-shadow it. Keep alive a little flame of joy in my heart, and never let the waters of sorrow and pain extinguish it. Forgive me if I waver a little; it's only temporary, for I know that no sorrow, danger or pain can take this inner joy and elation from me, because you, my redeemer live and I live with you!

Make sure no one is worse off because of having you for a neighbour or associate. *Stan Baldwin*

"'Unforgiveness' is like a scratch on an old record. The song never goes on to the end. It keeps the beautiful music yet to be released unheard, and all that resounds are the same old three or four chords again and again and again." *Katherine Walden*

"The preaching of St Francis of Assisi was effective because he lived the Word. He pondered the Word; he nurtured the Word; he became the embodiment of the Word. And thus when he proclaimed the Word, people saw the Word come to life."

Roch Niemier, OFM

"Everyone has inside of them a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is." *Anne Frank*

Your talent is a gift from God.
How you use it is your gift to God.

I never really knew what it was to be thankful 'till I felt your forgiveness, Lord. Thank you

Prayer: God of my hardened heart, I beg that you might soften me enough to hear the beating of my own heart. Hearing, may I then pulse with the beat of the heart of those with whom I live and work and play. Help me to have the courage to go to my sisters and brothers with whom I have difficulty, those who have injured me, intentionally or not. Let me speak to them with love, tell them of my pain, and wait attentively to hear what they have to say to me. Give me the grace to accept them as they are and the strength to be forgiving. Amen.