

26 JULY 2020

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

OPENING HYMN

Enter the house of the Lord, our God,

Enter the house of the Lord,
Sing of our God who reigns above,
Sing of his everlasting love,
Sing of his goodness all our days,
Come, be of one accord.
Lift up our voices, sing his praise,
As we enter the house of the Lord.

(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)

OPENING PRAYER

O God, protector of those who hope in You, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance Your mercy upon us and grant that, with You as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass, in such a way, as to hold fast even now, to those that ever endure. 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: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 118/119: 57,72,76-77,127-128,129-130

Our Response is: Lord, how I love Your law!

My path, I have resolved, O Lord,
is to obey your word.
The law from your mouth means more to me
than silver and gold. **R/**

Let your love be ready to console me
by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come to me and I shall live
for your law is my delight. **R/**

That is why I love you commands
more than finest gold.
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:
I hate false ways. **R/**

Your will is wonderful indeed;
therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light
and teaches the simple. **R/**

SECOND READING: Romans 8: 28-30

GOSPEL: Mt 13:44-52

REFLECTION:

In today's materialistic world, we are so attached to possessions and our "favourite things" that we loosen our grip on the ultimate treasure i.e. God's kingdom. Today's reading tells us how we can experience the power of God's kingdom. Let us pray that we may grow in wisdom and discernment to make the right decisions in attaining the kingdom of God. Today, as we celebrate the feasts of St. Joachim and St. Anne, the parents of our Blessed Virgin Mary, let us thank God for our parents and grandparents and pray for their wellbeing and protection.

In the first reading, we hear God offering Solomon something that each of us must have wished for at some time or another, "Ask what you would like me to give you". As a young king, Solomon could have asked for wealth, power, fame, worldly pleasures or possessions but in his humility, he asked God for wisdom and understanding so that he could be a worthy servant of God in leading God's people on the path of righteousness. When God offers such a proposition, He expects that our request will not be selfish but rather be beneficial for us as well as for others in the kingdom of God. What would I ask for if God made a similar offer to me today? **Pause**

The second reading exemplifies God's graciousness and love at work in choosing us and sharing His glory with us. If we love God and place our trust in Him, all things will work out for our good. This is very reassuring especially during these difficult times of the Covid 19 pandemic. When we sing the responsorial psalm, we acknowledge that God's law guides our lives. He is also the treasure of our hearts. Will I continue to trust God to take charge of my life and to enrich it? **Pause**

The Gospel passage compares the kingdom of God to "a treasure hidden in a field" and to "a pearl of great value" which once found, leads us to let go of everything else and focus on it alone. Thus, once we acquire the treasure of God's kingdom, all other good and desirable things will follow in our lives. But we can only experience the power of the kingdom of God if we are willing to sacrifice what we possess. It means we continue living the vocation we are called to with our prime focus on God's kingdom and its values. When we are blessed with the gift of wisdom and discernment, we learn to evaluate and appreciate that which is valuable and spend our time and energy pursuing it. When we overvalue earthly possessions, we devalue God. What do I consider the greatest treasure in my life? What am I willing to sacrifice in order to acquire it? **Pause**

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: God reigns in our hearts and in the world. Let us confidently bring our prayers to Him.

Our response is: **Lord, hear our prayer and may your kingdom come.**

We pray for all the members of the Church; that we may not strive for wealth or riches but open our hearts to receiving and sharing God's love; **(pause)**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for the leaders of our country and for world leaders; that they may use the gifts of wisdom and right judgment and formulate post-pandemic policies for the betterment of their people; **(pause)**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for the people in our country and in the world; that we may be united in our struggle against the pandemic and ensure the safety of all those we encounter and live with; **(pause)**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for the sick and suffering and those facing financial hardships due to the pandemic; that they may be supported and cared for in a loving and dignified manner. May those who are blessed with plenty use their wealth in the service of the underprivileged especially during these difficult times; **(pause)**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for parents and grandparents all over the world, that they may continue to pass on the rich traditions of our faith to their family members and that we may love, respect and value their presence, wisdom and experience and never neglect or exclude them. **(pause)**. Let us pray to the Lord....

Leader: Loving Father, in You we have found the treasure that makes our lives worthwhile. Open our hearts and fill our lives with goodness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us together at the Saviour's command and formed by Divine teaching, dare to say:
(All say the Lord's Prayer together) Our Father...

CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord, grant we pray, that the gift of Your Son, which You gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM THE CORONAVIRUS

Almighty and merciful God, who show Your love to all creation everywhere, hear graciously the prayers we make for all those affected by the Coronavirus in various parts of the world.

We come before You asking for a quick control of the outbreak, for a healing of those affected, for the victims and their families.

We pray for the doctors doing research that an effective vaccine to combat the sickness is

speedily found.

We pray for the Government and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

We are God's people

He has called us and chosen us,
Chosen us in Christ,
To work for the coming of his kingdom.

God gives us the Spirit of Christ,
That Christ may be wherever we are.

God gives us the Spirit of Christ
That we may bring the good news to all.

(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)