

**23 AUGUST 2020**

**TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**OPENING HYMN**

**Come, priestly people, God's kingly race,  
Dedicated nation, people of God,  
Come and praise the Lord.**

We sing to you,  
O Christ, beloved Son of the Father,  
We give you praise,  
O Wisdom everlasting and Word of God.

*(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)*

**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant Your people to love what You command and to desire what You promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. 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:** Is 22:19-23

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Ps 137:1-3, 6, 8

**Our Response is:** *Your Love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands.*

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,  
you have heard the words of my mouth.  
Before the angels I will bless you.  
I will adore before your holy temple. **R/**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love  
which excel all we ever knew of you.  
On the day I called, you answered;  
you increased the strength of my soul. **R/**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly  
and the haughty he knows from afar.  
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,  
discard not the work of your hands. **R/**

**SECOND READING:** Rom 11:33-36

**GOSPEL:** Mt 16:13-20

**REFLECTION:**

“Profession” in the secular world usually refers to a person’s work or business or it could also refer to a body of persons well trained in a particular field e.g. religious etc... In today’s Gospel text of Matthew, “*profession*” means declaring publicly who Jesus is. It implies that we stay committed to Jesus.

In the first reading, God is the one who clearly chooses. He removes Shebna from office and appoints his servant Eliakim. In the Gospel, Jesus chooses who will lead. God chooses Peter first and continues to choose all those who profess Him as ‘*Christ, the Son of the living God*’. In the ministries that we may be involved in, in our parishes, do we realize that God chooses the leadership? Am I ready to accept God’s choice?

In the Psalm, we are invited to thank God for the gift of revealing His divine Son to us. We did not earn or merit this revelation by ourselves. Let us ask God never to discard the work of salvation that he has begun in us. **Pause.**

In the Gospel we see that Jesus is not worried about what others are saying about his identity. Jesus is leading his disciples to come to a personal understanding and profession of faith of who He is. Peter gets it right when he says, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*” What is my personal profession about who Jesus is? **Pause.**

At the Eucharist, we gather in the Church as one body in Christ i.e. as His community, to encounter and experience Him in our lives, to share with others in the world. By knowing Jesus, He will invite us to be more self-giving, compassionate, forgiving, merciful, living and accepting of each other as a community of believers. Let us pause and reflect on what will be demanded of us when we profess Jesus.

**PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**Leader:** “*You are Christ, the Son of the Living God*”. Through the intercession of S. Peter, let us confidently bring our prayers to the Lord.

**Our response is: Loving Father, listen to your children praying**

We pray for all the members of the Church, that we may grow in our encounter with Christ and profess him faithfully by following the Gospel values; (*pause*); let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all the people in the world, that guided by the Spirit, we may choose wisely a just and peaceful government at the time of elections; (*pause*); let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those who have chosen the vocation of marriage, that they may build their foundation on Jesus and always respond to His call to service; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those baptised, that we may exercise the three fold ministry received at baptism in serving Christ, His community and others; *(pause)*; let us pray to the Lord...

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, You revealed Your divine Son, that we may come to know, love and serve Him. Hear our prayers, that like Saint Peter and the apostles, we may boldly proclaim Jesus to the whole world. 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, complete within us the healing work of Your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us so that in all things we may please You. 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**

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**

For Jesus is our Shepherd, he's our Friend,  
We shall love him to the end.

*(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)*