

.Here's a text if you've only a minute - - -

"I am the Lord, unrivalled;
There is no other God beside s me."
[1st Rdg—Isaiah 45]

I pray for the gift of simplicity and joy
in my service of God and all people *[Opening Prayer]*

"We always mention you in in our prayers and thank God for you."
[1 Thessalonians 1: 2]

We know, brothers and sisters that
God loves you and that you have been chosen,
[1 Thessalonians 1: 4]

"...(Lord) bring us your love and forgiveness and give us freedom
to serve you with our lives." *[Prayer over the gifts]*

Looking towards next week

What does next week hold for me, and how do I feel God
may be calling me?
And so, what do I want to ask of God for myself & others?



29TH SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME
Year A
19th October 2008



**Today's liturgy invites us, as followers of Christ,
to examine our priorities and our values,
in our lives of service of others.**

Opening Prayer [1st version]

Let us pray for the gift of simplicity and joy
in our service of God and all people

Almighty and ever-living God, our source of power and inspiration.
Give us strength and joy in serving you as followers of Christ.
We make our prayer.....

As usual, our prayer begins with a request and our aim.

To help me in this, it then describes God in a wonderful way.

**Perhaps filled with awe I make my final request to respond to such
love through the way I live in imitation of His Son, Jesus.**

I may well find that this prayer suffices for me throughout the week
ahead. I should not be in a hurry to move on.

Rather let me give the Lord time to encourage, nurture and fill me with
his hope and joy so that, like Jesus, I can be at the service of others.

As I prepare to give God some time in prayer I notice how I feel:
Perhaps joyful ... ? Sad ... ? Tired ... ? Distracted ... ? Eager ... ?
Longing for this time of quiet ... ?

What phrases/words catch my attention? I savour them and talk with
God about what they mean for me in my daily life.....

I remind myself that God accepts me as I am. With simplicity and trust,
I ask for what I need. As always, I end my prayer slowly and rever-
ently.....

2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-5

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonica which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you **grace** and **peace**.

We always mention you in our prayers and **thank** God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how **you have shown your faith in action, worked for love** and persevered in hope which you have from our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers and sisters that **God loves you and that you have been chosen**, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only in words, but as **power** and as **the Holy Spirit** and as **utter conviction**.

This is the earliest of Paul's epistles and the oldest preserved Christian writing. After bringing the Christian faith to the Jews in Thessalonica, Paul wrote to them when back in Corinth. His affection for them is obvious from the simplicity and joy in this letter.

= As I start to pray the scripture I ask that I may be given some of the joy and enthusiasm Paul had for those whose response to Christ is so exemplary.

= I imagine I am with the small group of Christians in Thessalonica. A messenger brings in to the room the rolled-up scroll that is the letter from Paul. I watch him unroll it and I feel the excitement as it is read out to us all..... I look at the others' faces.....

= What phrases / words touch me... ?

How do I feel when I begin to realise how much Paul cares for us/me, and is so impressed by us.....?

= As I now read and pray with the same letter today, how do I wish to respond....?

= Perhaps I reflect on how I am being asked in my everyday life to continue the work of Paul and those early Christians with the help, power and utter conviction that the Holy Spirit will give me.

= I ask the Spirit for these gifts with simplicity and joy.....?

= I end my prayer making a slow Sign of the Cross - the mark of a Christian.

The Gospel Matthew 22: 15-21

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, "Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because human rank means nothing to you.

Give us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, "You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me?

Let me see the money you pay the tax with." They handed him a denarius, and he said, "Whose head is this? Whose title?" They replied, "Caesar's." He then said to them, "Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

Two set of opponents are out to trap Jesus. If he says taxes should be paid, he alienates the religious nationalists. If he claims they shouldn't, then he risks arrest by the Romans as a political revolutionary. But Jesus does not claim a separation between God and the State. Yes, he says: give the coin back to Caesar. But the most important thing is to give to God what is God's: our moral values must be Kingdom values - God's values. Jesus is talking about our priorities.

= I take time to become still within I ask God's Spirit to read the text with me and gradually draw me into the scene I watch the Herodians and Pharisees. . . . I listen to them and I try to sense their motives and values as they endeavour to trap Jesus.

= Perhaps I ask them why they are opposed to Jesus?

= Perhaps I ask Jesus to show me, as I mull over my life, where and when I could better live God's values.

= I may desire to pray to the Spirit for the graces of sorrow, courage and re-commitment. The grace to want to pray

"(Lord) give me strength and joy in serving you as a follower of Christ."
[from the Opening Prayer]