



Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 1st October 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:
For the spread of the Gospel, the harvest

Keynote: We give thanks to our God who is generous and forgiving

Prophet Ezekiel 18:25-28

The prophet tells his listeners, *'The word of the Lord was addressed to me... when the upright person renounces integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, then that person dies because of the evil they themselves have committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, then that person deserves to live.'* We are it seems being given two lessons for the price of one. God is just and punishes the wrongdoer, but God is always merciful; it is never too late for us to renounce sin, *'When the sinner renounces sin... he has chosen to renounce all his previous sins; he shall certainly live; he shall not die.'*

Responsorial Psalm 24 [25] – A psalm seeking protection and forgiveness

Letter of Paul to the Philippians 2:1-11

The apostle Paul is once again contrasting the example of Christ, *'His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave...'* with the behaviours expected of the Christian disciple. *'If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common... then be united in your love with a common purpose and a common mind.'* The apostle understands that Christian love flows once we unseat concern for self as the driving-force of life, and replace it with a free choice to serve others in practical ways and to live for others. Paul would have us imitate Christ, *'Always consider the other person better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of their own interests first but thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus: 'His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave...'*

Gospel according to Matthew 21:28-32

Addressing the chief priests and the elders, Jesus asks: *'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "my son, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went.'* The second son we know was told the same thing, and said he would go to the vineyard but in fact didn't go. The question is addressed to us also. Which of the two are we? If we are indecisive, and lack the conviction of faith, and show no determination to walk with Jesus, then maybe, we should listen again to the words of Jesus originally addressed to the chief priests and elders when Jesus says, *'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you.'* Maybe there is still time and opportunity for us to turn to God and seek the forgiveness of faith.

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