



Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 29th October 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:
For the spread of the Gospel, the harvest
Keynote: The 'Great Commandment' is to love

Book of Exodus 22:20-26

'The Lord said to Moses, tell the sons of Israel this, "You must not molest the stranger or oppress him, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt. You must not be harsh with the widow or with the orphan... if you lend money to any of my people, to any poor man among you, you must not play the usurer with him: you must not demand interest from him... if you take another's cloak as a pledge, you must give it back to him before sunset.'

Then, as now, the poor, the stranger and the widow were the folk who needed protection. Money was lent only in charity to those in need, and then without the charge of interest. Some even might think it foolish maybe, to help the poor and then to charge them interest; or to keep their cloak their only covering? In our wealthy country despite Social Security benefit things haven't much changed in these days of mortgages and credit card debts, not being charged interest might sound very tempting. Hardship and poverty is still very much a feature of many people's lives. The familiar slogan: 'Making poverty history' has some way to go in practice, as does enriching our spiritual life by giving with a generous heart, without counting the cost.

Responsorial Psalm 17 [18] – A song praising the strength of God

First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 1:5-10

We continue with Paul's letter as the apostle recalls the way the folk of Thessalonica, received the faith. *'It was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel in spite of the great opposition all round you. This has made you the great example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia since it was from you that the word of the Lord started to spread... for the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere.'* We might re-awaken our own joy in the faith and allow the word of the Lord to spread by our words and example despite the cynical opposition to be found in the world today.

Gospel according to Matthew 22:34-40

Following the contest in last week's gospel between the Jewish leaders and Jesus; this week, battle re-commences as they again join forces to attack Jesus and lure him into teaching error. *'To disconcert him one of them put him a question. "Master, which is the greatest of the commandments of the Law?"'* Jesus' reply seems succinct and to the point. He says, *'You must love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it; you must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets also.'* Jesus' teaching is a significant advance in moral understanding of the issue. We still have a great deal to learn about love and loving.

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