



31st Sunday Ord. Time, Yr B

Lectio Divina

Lectio: In last Sunday's text, Jesus was about to enter in triumph into Jerusalem. Jesus is 'on a mission' to sort out his disciples and square off with his antagonists. So, he goes to the Temple, the religious heart of Jerusalem, Mk 11:1-11. He is 'revved up' and expresses his feelings forcefully. ①He curses the barren fig tree, Mk 11:12-14. ➤His disciples must bear fruit! ②He clears the Temple, Mk 11:15-17. The Temple is a place of prayer. ➤Prayer is more important than commerce for his disciples! This clearing of the Temple riles the religious authorities. But the people were interested in Jesus' teaching undermining the authorities' right to teach, Mk 11:18-19. ③Jesus then talks with his disciples about the power of prayer, Mk 11:20-26. ➤Prayer with faith is heard and answered! ④When challenged by the chief priests etc., Jesus asserts his authority, Mk 11:27-33. ➤Jesus is a trustworthy teacher! ⑤Jesus then teaches the Parable of the Talents, Mk 12:1-12. ➤Use your talents for the coming of the kingdom! This riles the authorities even further but they refrain from stopping Jesus for fear of the crowds. ⑥Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees about paying taxes to Caesar, Mk 12:13-17. ➤Religion and the State are not in conflict! ⑦Jesus rejects the Sadducees' claim that there is no resurrection, Mk 12:18-27. ➤Resurrection and eternal life is the guaranteed hope of believers!

➤ ⑧Then, in our text, is a question from a teacher of the Law. ➤Living according to the Commandments brings us close to the kingdom of God! So our reading concludes Jesus' venting of his strong feelings to his disciples and the religious authorities. "*After this no one dared to question him any more*", Mk 12:34!

■ This Sunday we start to prepare for the end of the Church year. The texts chosen for this and two more Sundays are the last of the readings from Mark's Gospel. Key understandings of Jesus' teachings are highlighted. This Sunday: The overall importance of living according to the Commandments; next Sunday: Be wary of teachers other than Jesus and give generously from your heart; third Sunday: Jesus will come again in judgement. If we live by these key teachings, then we can in truth acclaim Jesus as our Lord and king on the last Sunday of Year B readings.

Read: Mark 12: 28 - 34

Meditatio: Is my understanding of life in harmony with Jesus' understanding? Do I obey all the Commandments equally? For me, does the command of love encompass all the other Commandments? How much do I love God? Have there ever been other gods for me e.g. wealth, status, success, etc.? How do I experience God's love for me? Do I know how much God loves me? Do I love every part of myself – God loves every part of me!? Is my love of God seen in my love of my neighbour? Is my love of my neighbour limited or is it as all-embracing as I love myself? Is my love seen in my actions, my freely-given service of others? Does my life reflect Jesus' love for us? What challenging things have I done that expressed my love of my neighbour? Have I just kept away from my neighbour; keeping peace with my neighbour? Do I consider my neighbour is the person next door as well as those in need? Do I do things for the coming of God's kingdom? How have I experienced the closeness of the kingdom of God?

Oratio: Pray for understanding for those who still question Jesus' ways. Pray that the command of love will shape all we do. Pray for an appreciation of God's immense love for us. Pray that our love of God may be all-embracing. Pray for those who feel unloved, may they know God's ever faithful love for them. Pray that we will be known by how we love one another. Pray that our love of God may express itself in actual selfless service of others. Pray that we will help the neighbours next door while respecting their privacy.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Put your love into action.

✍ Fr Joe

Mark 12: 28 - 34

One of the scribes came up to Jesus and put a question to him, ‘Which is the first or all the commandments?’ Jesus replied, ‘This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’ The scribe said to him, ‘Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. To love with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.’ Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken said, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And after that no one dared to question him any more.