

16th October



As the Jubilee Year of Mercy draws to a close, we remember that God is always merciful, and we resolve to pray faithfully for all our own needs and for the needs of the world: for God knows what is for our good.

And Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

For a while he refused, but afterwards he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'"

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says.

'I call to you, God: surely you will hear me'. Let us pray with confidence that God hears our prayers, and will respond - often in ways we don't expect! - to hearts that are open to his grace.

Each human being is made in the image of God, and has innate dignity. This dignity is the foundation on which human rights, and the values we treasure, freedom, democracy and the rule of law, are founded.

We give thanks for judges, advocates, counsellors, mediators and all those who work for justice, reconciliation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes: that God may bless their work, and give them faith and hope to continue when things are difficult.

We pray for people whose dignity is undermined and destroyed by oppression and injustice; for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery; for people who suffer from bullying; for people trapped by addictions; for people who feel controlled and undermined by social or economic pressure.

We pray that God may give us the gift of persistence in prayer; and that we may always hear the voices of people who are silenced or excluded, and have the courage to speak out on their behalf.

Lord Jesus

You came to give honour to the least among us, people forgotten, overlooked and misjudged.

You came to give first place to the last, to people left behind, misunderstood and undervalued.

You came to call us to be a voice for those whose voices no-one hears.

Help us to be your ears to listen to their cries.

Help us to be your voice speaking out love and acceptance.

Help us to be your feet walking beside those in need.

You came for the least, the lost and last of this world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

23rd October

World Mission Sunday

Pope Francis' message for World Mission Sunday:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/papa-francesco_20160515_giornata-missionaria2016.html

'On this World Mission Sunday, all of us are invited to "go out" as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family.'

'Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice'

All seek what God gives, joy and peace, adventure and opportunity; and note that we are called to rejoice, to be joyful, and to celebrate God's mercy to us. 'The task of the missions is to take the word, the good news of Jesus Christ, to 'the hearts that seek the Lord' wherever they may be'.

Jesus told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral behaviour, and looked down their noses at the common people.

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'O God, I thank you



that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.'

"Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.'"

Jesus commented, "This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."

[Luke 18, 9-14 [The Message]]

We give thanks for the many blessings God has given to each of us, to our families and our communities, and we ask that our hearts may always be grateful for what we have, and generous in sharing our gifts with others.

We pray for people and communities within our society shunned or discriminated against because of their culture, sexual orientation or different way of life; for those who have suffered broken relationships; for divorced and remarried people, who may feel excluded by the Church.

We pray that we may always seek humbly for God's mercy, to show that mercy to others, and rest in God's power and love.

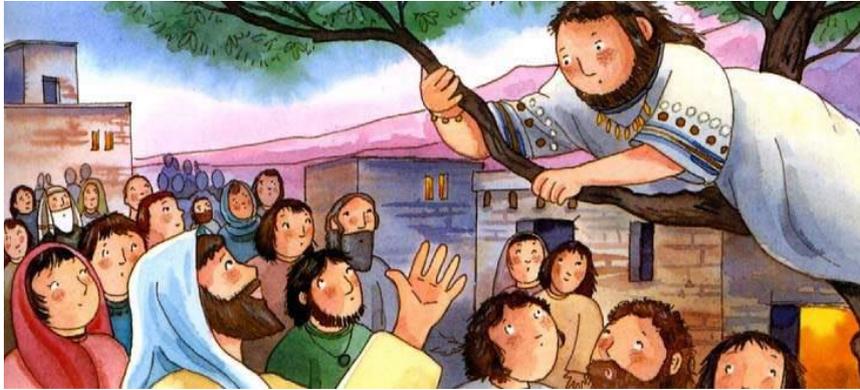
Lord, you have called us to witness to you.

Give us the courage by our words and deeds,

To proclaim your message without fear.

30th October

The Lord supports all who fall, and raises all who are bowed down.



Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since Zacchaeus also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

[Luke 19, 1-10]

As autumn draws in, with darker evenings and colder days, it is time to remember the dead, all the saints whose lives we celebrate, and all the souls of those we loved in life, and those we didn't, and to pray that they may find peace and joy with God.

As the days grow darker, we also think about our own death and how we might prepare for it; about people who are dying; and about those who care for them.

We remember that just as Jesus knew Zacchaeus' name, and called him by name, so he knows our names. To Jesus, each of us is special, and each of us matters.

We give thanks for the people who work in our hospices and those who offer palliative care in hospitals and at home, and give dignity to those who are dying.

We pray for those who have died, that God may have mercy on them and grant them peace.

We pray for all those who are bereaved, and the families and friends supporting those who grieve.

We pray for those who are terrified by the prospect of dying, that they may be comforted.

We pray for ourselves, that we may have a happy death and peace at the end.

May He support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. There in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

6th November



'Let my prayer come into your presence ...'

Some Sadducees came up. This is the Jewish party that denies any possibility of resurrection. They asked, "Teacher, Moses wrote us that if a man dies and leaves a wife but no child, his brother is obligated to take the widow to wife and get her with child. Well, there once were seven brothers. The first took a wife. He died childless. The second married her and died, then the third, and eventually all seven had their turn, but no child. After all that, the wife died. That wife, now—in the resurrection whose wife is she? All seven married her."

34-38 Jesus said, "Marriage is a major preoccupation here, but not there. Those who are included in the resurrection of the dead will no longer be concerned with marriage nor, of course, with death. They will have better things to think about, if you can believe it. All ecstasies and intimacies then will be with God. Even Moses exclaimed about resurrection at the burning bush, saying, 'God: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob!' God isn't the God of dead men, but of the living. To him all are alive."

[Luke 20, 27-38 The Message]

One of the saddest experiences we can have is the loss of children, and of young people, who die when their lives have scarcely begun. To witness the death of a child may test our faith in a merciful God to breaking point.

To be unable to have children is also a source of much suffering, of stress, anxiety and heartbreak, month after month, year after year.

This week we turn to God, the God of Life, in whom all are alive, to pray:

For children who have died

For young people with terminal illnesses and their families

For parents who have lost children in any circumstances.

For those who have experienced still birth or miscarriage

For couples unable to have children.

For women who have had abortions

And we give thanks for the generosity of foster families and adoptive families, and pray that God will bless them with happiness in their family life.

God of all mercies,

you make nothing in vain

and love all that you have made.

Comfort us in our grief,

and console us by the knowledge of your merciful love

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

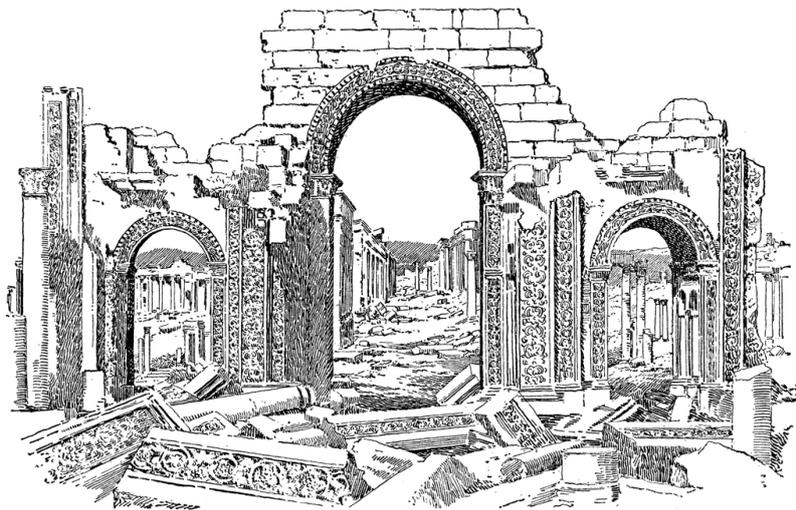
Amen.

13th November

Remembrance Day

We remember all victims of war

Remembrance Sunday falls on the Sunday nearest Armistice Day, 11 November, which marks the end of the First World War. On this day we remember all those who gave their lives for their country, all who suffered and died through acts of war, and those who were left behind to grieve and mourn.



And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, Jesus said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?"

And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers[c] and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.

[Luke 21, 5-19]

We pray for those who serve in the Armed Forces.

We pray for those who have given their lives in warfare, soldiers, sailors and aircrew; nurses and doctors, and ambulance crews; and innocent bystanders.

We pray for conscientious objectors and those who refuse to engage in war;

We pray for young people attracted by violent ideologies, that they may find better ways to challenge injustice and struggle for what is right.

We give thanks for the peacemakers and peacekeepers, those serving with UN peacekeeping missions, diplomats and negotiators: may they receive in abundance God's gifts of patience, wisdom and discernment.

O God, merciful and strong,
who crush wars and cast down the proud,
be pleased to banish violence swiftly from our midst
and to wipe away all tears,
so that we may all truly deserve to be called your children..

20th November Christ the King



And so our Jubilee of Mercy comes to an end, but God's mercy never comes to an end, and God does not turn away from us or leave us as orphans, but walks with us in all our journeys and adventures, all the days of our lives.

As we celebrate the feast of Christ the King we remember that his Kingdom is not like the kingdoms we know in this world. In that Kingdom, the last are first and the first, last. In that Kingdom, the King washes the feet of his friends, heals the sick and the wounded, forgives the sinners and comforts the broken-hearted, feeds the multitudes, and breaks bread with those he meets on the road. This is our King, in whom we meet the merciful face of the Father.

And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and

saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him: "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged there railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

[Luke 23, 35-43]

Let us give thanks for all our young people, and pray that they may grow in Christ, and witness in their lives to his compassion and love.

Let us give thanks for youth workers and all who strive to give young people the best start in life, that they may be blessed with patience, the gift of listening, and generous hearts.

God of Mercy

As you have forgiven us
So you send us out
Into our troubled world
Bearing your message of Mercy.

Give us generous hearts,
Listening ears, and searching eyes.

May we reach out to one another,
And to everyone in need
And be a sign of mercy
Wherever we go.
Amen.

