

Liturgy Notes 2025

The following notes may be of use to link the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, with Social Justice Sunday, 31 August 2024.

Introduction to the Theme

On this Social Justice Sunday, Australia's Bishops invite us to seriously consider our Christian responsibility to those who are in homelessness and mental ill-health. Like Jesus, we are to "offer service...to our sisters and brothers created in the image of God."

Yet it is more than practical assistance or *knowing about* situations and causes of poverty. We are called to *get to know* the names of people and to hear their stories. God is love, and love notices, listens and responds to each person uniquely.

As pilgrims of hope in this Year of Jubilee, we walk as equals with each other, and work towards a society of dignity and inclusion for all. Let us build a culture of encounter with those living in homelessness and mental ill-health. Let us find and be 'Signs of Hope on the Edge.'

Readings

First Reading: Sirach 3:17-20, 28-29

My son, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.
The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly,
and then you will find favour with the Lord;
for great though the power of the Lord is,
he accepts the homage of the humble.
There is no cure for the proud man's malady,
since an evil growth has taken root in him.
The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables,
an attentive ear is the sage's dream.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 67:4-7, 10-11. R. v.11

(R.) God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

1. The just shall rejoice at the presence of God,
they shall exult and dance for joy.
O sing to the Lord, make music to his name;
rejoice in the Lord, exult at his presence. (R.)

2. Father of the orphan, defender of the widow,
such is God in his holy place.
God gives the lonely a home to live in;
he leads the prisoners forth into freedom. (R.)

3. You poured down, O God, a generous rain:
when your people were starved you gave them new life.
It was there that your people found a home,
prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor. (R.)

Second Reading: Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them. But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant.

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:29

Alleluia, alleluia!
Take my yoke upon you;
learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.
Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 14:1. 7-14

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, "Give up your place to this man." And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher." In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

Reflection on the Readings/Homily Notes

One of the late Pope Francis's favourite phrases was "the culture of encounter", which is illustrated perfectly in today's readings. We are called to be attentive to those around us, especially those who suffer in any way. God has always been the friend and champion of those on the edges of society, and our challenge as Christians is to do likewise, no matter our discomfort or fear. In fact, the humble solidarity of Jesus and his followers is the how the gospel comes alive in our time.

The Book of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, is a wise reflection of a Jewish author living in the Greek diaspora. Wanting to share it with a wider readership, his grandson translated his words from Hebrew into Greek around the late 2nd Century BCE. The message in this passage is about being gentle and humble, which is most favourable in the eyes of God. It speaks to a well-off and powerful businessman, but the advice can apply in many situations. When we interact with those who are living in poverty, homelessness or with mental ill-health, it is more important to be gentle than showily generous. Giving excess money can be simple, but really noticing someone with the eyes of

love, and listening to their story, is the harder challenge. In the words of Venerable Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, “There are things that the poor prize more highly than gold, tho’ they cost the donor nothing; among these are the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look, and the patient hearing of their sorrows.” Just as the wise person stoops down in reverence to God, the source of all power, the merciful person stoops down in reverence to those who are suffering, who show us the face of Jesus Christ.

At first glance, Psalm 67 seems to make promises that do not reflect the realities of life. Does God really make a home for the poor and lonely? Does God always parent the orphan, defend the vulnerable and feed the starving? It is important to note that the psalms were written at different times for different purposes. Some lament, some praise and some even berate God. This psalm reflects a time of success and prosperity for the kingdom of Israel. When things are going well, we naturally praise and thank God for the gifts in our lives. However, it is not a theological statement about God’s action – either giving suffering or taking it away. This psalm does proclaim God as both a creator and saviour in our world. Jesus showed us how God’s action for the good might not simply be taking the pain away, but living it with us and offering transformation through it. Nevertheless, this psalm is clear that God is always on the side of the suffering. God is a home for those with no home; God is freedom even in captivity; God remains faithful when everyone has deserted us.

In this Jubilee year, we are called to be ‘pilgrims of hope’ and this passage in Hebrews comes at the end of a section about the pilgrimage of Christian life. As such, we know that there will be pitfalls, roadblocks and injuries along the way, but there is an end point in which we have hope. Today’s reading describes the final resolution of all things in Christ. We looking towards a heavenly hope of a home for all, a refuge and safe place where all are valued and dignified. Because we have such a vision and belief, we are motivated to bring alive those values on earth, in small and large ways. In the new covenant of Jesus, we get a glimpse of this hope, symbolised in the cup of wine at the Last Supper. Therefore, every eucharistic celebration is to be a symbol and rehearsal of the promises of the reign of God.

Finally, in the gospel, Jesus gives a direct example of the culture of encounter. We see how he valued those living in poverty, or with disability. He ate, drank and partied with them, taking the humblest place at the table. Jesus reverses the human tendency to rank people in society, and only associate with like people. Rather, it is a privilege to invite those who are poor to our tables; it is not a duty. Something special happens when we are friends with those who are outcast, even when the rewards are not immediately obvious. As a poor church of the poor, how do we demonstrate that we are equal as both guests and hosts?

On this Social Justice Sunday, we are encouraged to be pilgrims who find hope on the edges of society. Let us really encounter and listen to those who are living with homelessness and mental ill-health. As Pope Francis said in a homily on the 23rd of September, 2016, it is “not just seeing, but looking; not just hearing, but listening; not just passing people by, but stopping with them; not just saying ‘what a shame, poor people!', but allowing yourself to be moved with compassion; “and then to draw near, to touch and to say: ‘Do not weep’ and to give at least a drop of life”.

This is not only a personal call, but a challenge to society. The vision in Hebrews spurs us to urgent action to support and counteract homelessness and mental ill-health right now. We *can* be better and it is our responsibility as Christians to create a world of greater dignity and equality. The Social Justice Statement concludes: “Together with our homeless sisters and brothers, we are all pilgrims of hope. We are on a journey together towards the day when we will all live in happiness in the Father’s house. There will be no more suffering, no more exclusion, and no more loneliness. When we challenge the superficiality and indifference which prevails in society and seek to serve those

who are homeless and mentally ill with love and respect, we offer a powerful sign of hope that this day will come.”

Prayers of the Faithful

The following intercessions are offered for incorporation in your Prayers of the Faithful.

Presider: Dear friends, Jesus demonstrated God’s generosity and humility among those on the edges of society. Let us bring our prayers with trust in God’s heart for those who are poor.

For Pope Leo and all church leaders.

May they demonstrate Jesus’ humble service and solidarity with the vulnerable.
Lord, hear us. R. Lord hear our prayer.

For the leaders of nations.

May they find ways of addressing both material and relational poverty.
Lord, hear us. R. Lord hear our prayer.

For those who serve people living with homelessness or mental ill-health.

May they find hope in their ministry of listening and accompaniment.
Lord, hear us. R. Lord hear our prayer.

For those in need of a safe home and mental wellbeing.

May they receive companionship and support to reduce stigma and thrive with loving care.
Lord, hear us. R. Lord hear our prayer.

For those who have died, especially in situations of poverty or isolation.

May they be welcomed as citizens of heaven, where everyone is a first-born child of God.
Lord, hear us. R. Lord hear our prayer.

Presider: God of the poor, you are home for the homeless and companionship for the lonely. Give us the gentleness and compassion of your Son to address the needs of our world. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

Suggested Music

As One Voice 1 (AOV1)

As One Voice 2 (AOV2)

As One Voice Next Generation (AOVNG)

Catholic Worship Book II (CWB II)

Gather 3rd ed (G)

Sing and Rejoice (SR)

RitualSong 2nd ed (RS)

Entrance

All Are Welcome G 850

Come to the Feast AOV1-151

Christ, Be Our Light (Farrell) AOV2-3, CWBII 540

Gather Us in AOV1-12, CWB II 501

Gather Your People, O Lord (Hurd) AOV1-71, CWBII 490

Love Is His Word CWBII 553

Sing a New Song AOV1-80

Procession of the Gifts

Beatitudes CWBII 456
Fill my House SR 24
Servant Song CWBII 461
The Cry of the Poor (Foley) AOV1-83, CWBII 618
The Kingdom of God AOVNG 125
Who Will Speak? (Farrell) AOV2-102

Communion

Act Justly AOV1-50
As Grains of Wheat AOV2-153
Bread of Life, Hope of the World (Farrell) CWBII 459
Broken for the Broken RS 1050
Come to the Table (Angotti) AOVNG 32
Grant to Us, O Lord CWBII 291
I Have Loved You (Joncas) AOV1-126, CWBII 511
Our Blessing Cup (Hurd) AOV1-7
Ubi Caritas (Taizé) CWBII 634
We Are One AOVNG 142

Thanksgiving

Amazing Grace AOV1-29, CWBII 450
Blessed Are They AOV1-55
I Have Loved You with an Everlasting Love AOV1-126
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace CWBII 555
Open my Eyes AOV1-166

Commented [JM1]: which hymnal?

Recessional

A New Heart for a New World AOV1-158
A Place at the Table AOVNG-1
Bread to Share RS 927
City of God AOV1-57 CWBII 453
Companions on the Journey AOV1-188
Galilee Song AOV1-5
Go Make a Difference (Angrisano) AOVNG 52
Let There Be Peace on Earth AOV1-190
Sing of the Lord's Goodness AOV1-131
Song For Human Rights AOV2-135, CWBII 606
Take the Word of God with You (Walker) CWBII 607
They'll Know We Are Christians (Scholtes) AOV1-130
Though the Mountains May Fall (Schutte) AOV1-182

More information and downloadable resources related to the Statement from the Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au