

Reflecting
on the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Archdiocese of
Liverpool

Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks in this story.*



- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a flower from the garden or a plant next to the light.

Let us begin our time of prayer for the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Breathe deeply and allow yourself to become still.

Let the music help you to relax. Ask for God's grace and light to fill your heart and your mind as you open to the Word.



Oh, the love of my Lord is the essence
Of all that I love here on earth
All the beauty I see He has given to me
And His giving is gentle as silence.

Every day, every hour, every moment
Have been blessed by the strength of His love
At the turn of each tide,
He is there at my side,
And His touch is as gentle as silence.

There've been times when I've turned from his
presence
And I've walked other paths, other ways
But I've called on His name in the dark of my shame
And His mercy was gentle as silence.

Spend some time just looking at the three images.



- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



Pray the Responsorial Psalm for today.



I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

I will give you glory O God my King,
I will bless your name forever,
I will bless you day after day,
And praise your name forever.

I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
Slow to anger, abounding in love
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

All your creatures shall thank you O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing,
They shall speak of the glory of your reign,
And declare your might O God.

I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

The Lord is faithful in all his words,
And loving in all his deeds,
The Lord supports all who fall,
And raises all who are bowed down.

I will bless your name forever, O God my King.

Now, either read slowly to yourself this short passage from the Gospel according to Matthew or better still, read it aloud, again slowly.

From the Gospel according to Matthew 11:25-30



At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

The Gospel of the Lord.



Spend a few moments allowing some aspect of the Gospel – a word/phrase or image – to touch you more deeply and read this part a second time, aloud if possible.

Now move on to this week's reflection by Kathleen McGhee SND...



Recent events have left many of us in two minds about life; life that is, as we have experienced it before, during and even after coronavirus. What was life like before? What has it been like during these months? And most importantly of all what will it be like afterwards? With the restrictions of lockdown, a surprising thing happened for many of us. We began to notice and even talk to our neighbours more; we were touched by the numerous acts of loving kindness expressed for the vulnerable; the whole nation applauded the NHS every week; we saw clear skies and heard the birds sing!

This change in attitude has led to questions about how we had been living before it all happened. Had we become too self-absorbed, too unaware of people and indeed of the world around us? Could this experience give us all a desire to change? Could things really be different? What would that mean?

As we meet Jesus in today's Gospel we find him dealing with similar questions in Capernaum where the people were stubbornly refusing to listen to him. They would not change their ways. He turns to his Father in gratitude for the utter simplicity of his message while lamenting the obstinacy of many of his listeners. His message is simply one of love, easily understood in its clarity by infants, yet totally rejected by many powerful people.

"Love God and your neighbour as yourself." It is a consistent message and Jesus assures us it is where rest, kindness and happiness are to be found. "Come to me" is more than an invitation to lay down burdens;

it calls us into an ever closer friendship with the loving Lord. There we will find rest, there we will find happiness, there we will be far from the trappings of sophistication and power.

“Love God and your neighbour as yourself.” It is a consistent message and Jesus assures us it is where rest, kindness and happiness are to be found. “Come to me” is more than an invitation to lay down burdens; it calls us into an ever closer friendship with the loving Lord. There we will find rest, there we will find happiness, there we will be far from the trappings of sophistication and power.

So as we reflect on this Gospel and remember the pandemic which has beset the world and watch what has been happening in the streets of our cities, do we go back to how things were, or would we like to live in a world where there is more kindness, more justice, more awareness of one another and of our world – in our words, more love? If so, there is only one place to find it. Jesus makes it plain: “Come to me ... learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart”.

Desire for revolution and change is proclaimed all around us. Could the revolution so often articulated by Pope Francis, “the revolution of tenderness and love”, be the genuine one of which we are graced to be part and for which we all long. It is simply a revolution of the heart: “Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, make our hearts like yours.”

Take a few moments to receive and reflect on this poem by American poet Wendell Berry.



The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world and am free.



As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need.

Let's begin with the prayer Archbishop Malcolm has asked us to pray at this time and then you may like to include one or more of prayers that follow and/or add your own:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

We pray for Pope Francis ... may he continue to lead with a passion for justice and truth and demonstrate an unflinching trust in the loving care of God.

We pray for our world as it fights the coronavirus ... may courage and wisdom prevail so that the most appropriate action will be taken at the right times.

We pray for all who hunger for basic necessities, especially those experiencing the horrors of war and drought ... may they be assisted by effective relief agencies.

We pray for the work of our diocesan Synod ... that our community will wisely discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us during the coming months.

We pray now in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

To end your time of reflection, listen to *Come to me*.



*Come to me, all who labour and are heavy burdened,
And I shall give you rest.
Take up my yoke and learn from me,
For I am meek and humble of heart.
And you'll find rest, for your souls.
Yes my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

You, God are my shepherd. I shall never be in need.
Fresh and green are the meadows where you give me rest.

Beside peaceful waters you restore my true self;
There you lead me to walk in the path of new life.

Should I be surrounded by the shadows of death,
I will not fear for you are steadfast in your love.

Acknowledgements

Cover image: Armagh Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Patrick East Transept South Wall Window, Wikimedia Commons.

Oh, the love of my Lord: Estelle White, © McCrimmon Publishing Company, Ltd.

Images on page 3 (top to bottom): *heavy burdens...*, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pencrush/1822979020/>; *heavy burden*, Wikimedia Commons; oxen pulling ploughs, Wikimedia Commons.

Responsorial Psalm: Text © The Grail (England) Used by permission Music by Jo Boyce © CJM Music, CCLI & One License No. 7123386 CCLI & One License Song Title: I Will Bless Your Name.

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, copyrighted 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Peace of Wild Things © Wendell Berry.

Come to me © Gregory Norbert.

One License Number A-735511.