

## The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR B October 11 2015

The question of suffering may absorb the minds of theologians and philosophers, but it is not an issue to be debated. Nor is it a problem to be solved. Rather, suffering is a reality to be entered into with compassion and mercy in the name of Christ. When we encounter those who suffer, the Gospel calls us to give our lives and resources to serve and heal. And when we are faced with suffering of our own, the Gospel gives us the assurance of God's presence and grace, and a community of companions to journey with us. This is the call of the Lectionary this week.

May we never use our worship as an escape from suffering, but allow it to drive us to be the presence and compassion of God to those who suffer wherever we may.

### INTRODUCTIONS

*For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

#### **Job 23 : 1-9, 16-17**

We began this book last Sunday, as it explores the theology of suffering. Here Job protests that even in a court he would be found innocent; therefore his illness and the tragic events of his life cannot be regarded as God's punishment for any wrongdoing.

#### *or* **Amos 5 : 6-7, 10-15**

The only good life is life with God. Therefore, says Amos, although worldly wealth and comforts seem desirable, they can bring harm both to yourself and to others.

**Psalm 22:1-15:** A cry for God's presence and rescue in a time of great persecution and trial in which God seems to have forsaken the Psalmist. God is holy and the Psalmist's ancestors trusted God and were saved, but now the Psalmist is being attacked, and is suffering greatly, and no rescue seems to be forthcoming.

Or **Psalm 90:12-17:** A plea for God to return to God's people and have compassion on them, filling them with God's love so that they can rejoice and celebrate, and so that their works may last.

#### **Hebrews 4 : 12-16**

This treatise often switches between doctrine and ethics. In this short passage we find both a statement of our way to God through the work of Christ and the motive for all our behaviour.

#### **Marks 10 : 17-31**

It is not easy to be good, says Jesus. There are commandments to be kept; there is wealth to be handled wisely; there are many worldly attractions and ties which may distract us from receiving all the joys found in his kingdom.

### TEXT OF READINGS

[http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB\\_RCL/Pentecost/BProp23\\_RCL.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp23_RCL.html)

### COLLECTS OF THE DAY

#### **Collect One**

O God,  
forasmuch as without thee  
we are not able to please thee;  
Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit

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may in all things direct and rule our hearts;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Collect Two

O God,  
without you we are not able to please you;  
Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit  
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

*Presider or deacon*

Let us offer prayers to God who gathers the poor in the kingdom.

*Deacon or other leader*

For *N* our bishop and *N* our rector/presbyter, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For mercy, justice, and peace among all peoples.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For good weather, abundant fruits of the earth, and peaceful times.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our parish/town/village/city and those who live in it and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, the poor and the oppressed, the hungry and the homeless.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the dying and the dead.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lifting our voices with all creation, with Saint \_\_\_\_\_ and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

*Presider*

God whose Word is living and active, hear the prayers we offer this day and help all peoples in their weakness to approach the throne of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

When Jesus is questioned about divorce, his response highlights commitment to God, fidelity to each other, and mutual love. When the disciples speak sternly to children, Jesus speaks lovingly, and welcomes them in blessing as the true

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benefactors of the kingdom of God. We pray, "Bless our children and our homes", and respond, "Hear us, dear Lord Jesus".

That those whose lands and dwellings have been torn apart by violence, war and dislocation, may be restored. We pray with them: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

That those who experience danger in their service for Christ's church may be protected. With them we pray: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

That where our young couples are making plans for marriage, we ask with them: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

That our children and friends who struggle to keep their marriages intact as they resist the sadness of separation and divorce, may know your presence. We ask: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

For parents of newborns who are seeking Holy Baptism for their young, as a congregation we pray with them: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

Because we have often fail to understand the difficulties of married life, and chose to criticize and assign blame, we ask for forgiveness and say: Bless our children and our homes. **Hear us, dear Lord Jesus.**

P: Now that we have prayed in faith, we trust your answer, God, who knows our hearts.

**Amen.**

### POST COMMUNION

Holy and blessed God,  
you feed us with the body and blood of your Son  
and fill us with your Holy Spirit.  
May we honour you,  
not only with our lips but in lives dedicated  
to the service of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### PRAYERS

Eternal One, whose thoughts and ways are not ours,  
you alone are God, awesome, holy, and most high.  
School us in the ways of faith and wisdom,  
that we, like Job,  
may learn to truly see and hear,  
and in humility find blessing. Amen.

God, you promise never to forsake us,  
but to bring us to life,  
nurture us with your presence,

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and sustain us even in the hour of our death.

Meet us in our deepest doubts  
when we feel abandoned,  
drowning in our fear of your absence.

Visit us in the tension between our yearning and our anger,  
that we may know your mercy and grace in our time of need. Amen.

God of all who are cast down,  
you call us to seek good  
and to meet oppression with justice.  
Teach us to find salvation  
in the emptying of ourselves for the sake of those in need,  
so that goodness may prevail  
and your kingdom come in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Friends in Christ,  
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers  
as dear to us as our own needs.  
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,  
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions  
on behalf of the church and the world.  
Hear our prayers, God of power,  
and through the ministry of your Son  
free us from the grip of the tomb,  
that we may desire you as the fullness of life  
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,  
and guided them in the way of your love,  
so listen now to those who call upon you.  
Move us to praise your gracious will,  
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death  
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,  
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens  
and healed our spirits.  
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,  
those seeking healing,  
those in need within the church and the world.  
Hear our prayers  
that we may love you with our whole being  
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,  
you call us to love and serve you  
with body, mind, and spirit  
through loving your creation  
and our sisters and brothers.  
Open our hearts in compassion  
and receive these petitions

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on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.  
Holy One,  
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards  
of the fragile bounty of this earth  
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,  
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,  
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.  
We offer these prayers of love  
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,  
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.  
Loving God,  
open our ears to hear your word  
and draw us closer to you,  
that the whole world may be one with you  
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,  
you who hear the cries of those in need,  
receive these petitions of your people  
that all who are troubled  
may know peace, comfort, and courage.  
Life-giving God,  
heal our lives,  
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds  
and offer you thanks from generation to generation  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,  
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,  
hear our prayers  
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,  
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings  
with your unending compassion.  
Redeeming Sustainer,  
visit your people  
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,  
that we may hurry to make you welcome  
not only in our concern for others,  
but by serving them  
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

### LECTIONARY NOTES 1

#### ***Job 23:1-9, 16-17:***

- Satan, in the book of Job, isn't a creature of hell, but part of the heavenly council, actually "the devil's advocate" in a way. How does this differ from our typical conception of Satan?

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- "He will curse you to your face." Satan is trying to figure out what will push Job to curse God. What would make you curse God? How mad have you ever gotten at God?
- "In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Of course, we're only on chapter two. But, still, sometimes people can handle a remarkable amount of pain and still remain hopeful. Can you? How do you think people do this?

### **Psalm 22:1-15:**

- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These words, which open the Psalm, are found on Jesus' lips on the cross. Some say he was reciting the Psalm, to comfort others. People don't like to think about Jesus feeling forsaken by God. But I think it is ok to believe Jesus felt alone in that moment - because despite his feelings, he had faith enough to follow through with what he believed was God's call for him.
- Surely, we've all felt forsaken by God sometimes. Alone. Finding "no rest" as the Psalmist describes. The scene the Psalmist describes is one of fear and desperation to feel God's presence. Have you experienced this? When? How? Did you find God present there?

### **Hebrews 4:12-16:**

- "The word of God is living and active" - and yet sometimes we try to make it stand still in time and space, not allowing it to speak to us in new ways, not allowing it to make *us* be living and active as well!
- "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" - That's some powerful imagery. The Word of God is often used as a sharp sword, but usually, unfortunately, as a weapon that hurts and causes pain. Here, the author describes a sword that pierces us in a different way - a sword that - gets to the point, so to speak - and sees and judges our hearts. What does the Word of God have to say about your heart?
- The high priest imagery in Hebrews doesn't speak to me really. What do you make of it?
- What does speak to me: "not . . . unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but . . . in every respect tested as we are, yet without sin." Some theologians in church history emphasized the "immutability of God" - that God is not changeable. But, that doesn't sound very compassionate either. The author here describes a Christ who is moved by our sufferings, walking with us, and living as an example to us.

### **Mark 10:17-31:**

- "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" I think this is the question many ask at the beginning of their faith journey: "What do I have to do to get into heaven?" basically. We're very result-driven, humans. We want to know what to do to get the result we want.
- "you lack one thing;" What thing does Jesus mean? We know the following words connect, but what exactly would he say the man is lacking? Treasure in heaven?

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- "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor" - Why do we take Jesus' words so literally in other places, but not here? I'm afraid the answer is: we'd rather not.
- camel/eye/needle imagery - hyperbole, or straight-talk? What do you think? Again, why are we reluctant to take this passage literally?
- The disciples think with Jesus' standards, things sound hopeless. But Jesus reminds us - again - of grace: "for mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."
- Peter sounds a little resentful, like Jesus is preaching to the choir, or maybe he just needs some words of encouragement. Either way, Jesus promises that what has been given up to follow him hasn't gone unnoticed.
- Folk singer Hugh Blumenfeld has a great song connected to this text called "Camel Filters." A couple of verses::

- *There's a man who thinks that he's a king  
'Cause he writes his name in gold  
He's got towers and plazas named for him  
We won't miss him when he's cold  
He's got boats and trains and cars and planes  
Wants a space shuttle with a phone  
He can go anywhere anytime he likes  
Except I believe he'll have a tough time  
Getting through the eye of the needle...*

*Now maybe Jesus was the son of God  
And maybe the prophet of the people  
Maybe he was just a working man  
Who would not be bought by the devil  
But what he said he said quite clear  
No need for the good priest here  
Even the butt of your cigarette  
Will not clear the eye of the needle*

*By Beth Quick*

## LECTIONARY NOTES 2

### REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The overwhelming awareness in this week's Scripture passages is of the reality of suffering, and the pain and indignity that it brings. In Job, the suffering of Job is made worse by his sense of abandonment by God, and his longing to put his case before God. In Psalm 22 the sense of abandonment is echoed, as the Psalmist speaks of being persecuted, without any sense of God's presence or rescue. In the Amos reading, there is the threat of judgment on those who ignore the suffering of others, and who refuse to turn to justice and compassion on behalf of those who suffer. In Psalm 90 there is the call for God to have compassion of God's suffering people. In Hebrews we find the assurance that Jesus is trustworthy because he was tempted as we are and overcame, and because he offers us mercy. Finally in the Gospel, after graphically revealing how hard it is for the wealthy to embrace the sacrificial life of God's Reign, Jesus assures his disciples that their sacrifice – and the persecution which they will certainly experience – is not in vain, and that God will restore good things to them. A huge part of the struggle for those who suffer



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is the sense of loneliness, isolation and unwantedness that is brought on by the pain, and that heightens it. Even Jesus shared this experience. However, underlying all of it, is the assurance of God's compassion and the mercy that God offers. And, in Jesus' words in Marks' Gospel, there is the call for us to be agents of God's mercy, grace and friendship.

### CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

'I have come more and more to realize that it is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can experience.' Mother Teresa.

### Global Application:

Our world is full of "shadow people" – the unseen sufferers who struggle daily with poverty, dread & infectious diseases, lack of clean water and sanitation, with few resources and fewer opportunities. For many of the wealthy, these people remain unseen even when they live next door, and "out of site" is "out of mind." It is easy to fall into the trap of viewing these "shadow people" as "issues" to be resolved. It is easy to lose our sense of their humanity, even as we fight for justice on their behalf. It is easy, as we, who are relatively comfortable, secure and wealthy, go to "help" those who suffer that we embrace an uneven power dynamic in which we are "saviours" coming to "uplift" and "rescue" the "poor." The call of the Lectionary this week to do more than this. A powerful, healing work of justice is to really notice the "shadow people," to acknowledge and honour their humanity, and then to offer, not just a hand of help, but a hand of friendship and solidarity.

### Local Application:

Every community has suffering people, but often these people find themselves feeling isolated and marginalised even within our churches. Too often we try to avoid facing or acknowledging the reality of suffering, and in the process we leave sufferers feeling hurt, humiliated and lonely. This week, is there a "wealth that you can give to the poor" in your community? Whether it's a wealth of friendship or compassion or support, we do have wealth to offer struggling, sick and lonely people. The friendship, the "standing with" and the acknowledgment is often a far more powerful gift than any material help we can offer – which sometimes only confirms our superiority and further disempowers. Furthermore, when we face suffering ourselves, it is always important that we have the humility to receive the help and compassion of others, and not embrace a proud, stoic aloofness. It is only as we walk through suffering together that we can really experience and reflect the mercy and compassion of God.

## SERMON OUTLINE

### Mk 10:17-31 What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Jesus met all kinds of fascinating characters during his ministry - & 1 such character was the rich young man in today's Gospel..

1. Seeking 17-21: We encounter the young man as he *ran up & knelt before him* - 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' he was so near yet so far from obtaining his heart's desire... He had lived a good life – keeping most of God's commandments – "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." - *I have kept all these since my youth.* Yet he was unhappy & dissatisfied... Jesus goes to the heart of his problem – <sup>21</sup> *'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, & give the money to the poor, & you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me'*



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2. Sorrowing 22-27: Jesus knew that covetousness & greed was his no1 problem - <sup>22</sup>*When he heard this, he was shocked & went away grieving, for he had many possessions.* His wealth came between him & God – cf parable of the Rich Fool...

So Jesus declares:- <sup>23</sup> *'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'* <sup>25</sup>*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'*

3. Sacrificing 28-31: Peter declares *'Look, v28 we have left everything & followed you.'* – their nets, homes, families... Jesus promises that they will receive <sup>30</sup> *in the age to come eternal life* – no matter what they have to face in this age... Such was the reason for God sending Jesus into the world – the reason why John wrote his Gospel – Jn 20.31: *These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that by believing you may have life in his name.*

By Norman Porteous

### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

["The Peril \(and the Promise\) of Being Met by Jesus,"](http://day1.org/1473-the-peril-and-the-promise-of-being-met-by-jesus) Bishop William H. Willimon, Day 1, <http://day1.org/1473-the-peril-and-the-promise-of-being-met-by-jesus>

"Money," Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-money>

"Sticker Shock for the Soul," Wiley Stephens, Day 1

[http://day1.org/4207-sticker\\_shock\\_for\\_the\\_soul](http://day1.org/4207-sticker_shock_for_the_soul)

### CHILDREN HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Worshiping with Children, Proper 23B, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/09/year-b-proper-23-28th-sunday-in.html>

"Flying Upside Down," Frances Woodruff, On the Chancel Steps

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/flying/>

["Sermon of the Week,"](http://www.sermons4kids.com/) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](http://www.sermons4kids.com/) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick,

Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles.

Sermons4Kids.com.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

["Cain and Abel,"](http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or28su.php) Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild. (Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or28su.php>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity,](http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html) Ordinary 28, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.

<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

**HYMN SUGGESTIONS**

O Master Let Me Walk With Thee  
There's A Wideness In God's Mercy  
I Surrender All  
When I Survey The Wondrous Cross  
Jesus Calls Us O'er The Tumult  
Everyone Belongs  
How Long?  
You Have Shown Us (Link to YouTube video)  
God Of Justice (Link to YouTube video)  
The Wonderful Cross (Link to YouTube video)