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## ORDINARY 24B

15th September 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening Prayers

Hold a moment of stillness. Listen to the noises around you. Focus your mind on God and on this time of worship.

When you feel ready, say these words aloud:

In the name of all that is right, all this is holy, all that is loving, all that is just,

I come to worship you, God of justice.

In seeking to follow in your way, and learn of your call on my life afresh,

I gather in your presence.

Come into this space, by your Spirit I pray,

Amen.

**You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.**

**Reading:** Mark 8:27-38 – [Click for reading](#)

## Responding to the reading

How can you reflect the glory of God?

Today's Gospel reading from Mark 8, centred on the words of Jesus brings a note of reality. Take up the cross, do what you can to bear witness to justice and to build a more just world for all. Anything worthwhile has a cost, reflected in the focus on the cross. Bearing the cross declares the message of the church loud and clear.

It is Gospel wisdom that we are invited to bear the cross. It is the pathway to resurrection and hope. With the cross at the centre of our existence, we are called to model leadership that handles power with redemptive love, with a capacity to share and give up power, always seeking to empower others.

The Cross is the Christian symbol of humility, the humility of God, and that changes how we engage with the world around us, with our neighbours. The Cross is an invitation to recognise that all human beings desire dignity, respect and flourishing.

Most refugees and people seeking sanctuary come from situations of pain and suffering and danger. The experience of the rejection, suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ gives meaning to their experience of rejection and hurt. In the cost of Christ's passion and pain is also the gift of healing and hope. Here suffering is not willed by God, but is encompassed in God's love. In the face of sorrow and hurt it is appropriate to ask "why", and to want to find meaning and wholeness in it. The Bible reflects the stories and experiences of a travelling people, undertaking difficult and dangerous journeys. Their hopes lie in a bruised Messiah.

We are called to practice the gospel by listening to, paying attention to, entering and identifying with the stories of pain and suffering, that refugees, and those seeking sanctuary, bear and tell. This is part of what it means to carry and bear witness to the cross.

In working with those who are hurting through the violence of war, famine, poverty and persecution, we together bear the weight of sin; we together struggle for justice, and seek the

freedom of all. Refugees and those seeking sanctuary among us are ambassadors, the messengers and witnesses of God.

Challenge the framing and stereotyping of refugees and those seeking sanctuary as a cost, and a burden, people who jump queues to benefits. Honour them for the gifts they are and bring, and advocate this change. It is the refugees that so often carry a cross, pay a very high cost, often losing all they have. Many lose their lives in their search for a better life.

It is worth remembering that Jesus carried his own cross. Along the way, Simon of Cyrene was “compelled...to carry his cross”. He just did it. No fuss, no noise, no seeking of attention. A quiet witness. Reflecting the glory of God, without words. We are likewise compelled in our faith journey to pick up the cross, without seeking attention.

And a question for you to reflect on this week – you may even wish to write it down, or put a note in your phone to remind you to spend some time with this:

*In what ways are you compelled to carry the cross with those bearing hurt?*

### **Responding through music**

563 STF – O Jesus, I have promised - [YouTube](#)

664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service - [YouTube](#)

### **Blessing**

You shall go out with peace,  
And be sent forth with joy,  
And the mountains and the hills will break forth before you.  
There will be shouts of peace, and hope, and welcome, and prosperity for all,  
And the trees of the fields shall clap, shall clap their hands.

Amen.

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers**

### **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September**

- Today, seek out a space to be quiet. Seek out a moment when you can just be in a quiet space, and listen to the sound of your own breathing.
- Stay in this space as long as the responsibilities and calls on your time allow (i.e. don't get fired for disappearing from work for 2 hours!) and just listen to the rhythms of your breathing. Hear, in those rhythms, the ancient name of God: Yhud, Hey, Vah, Hey. Y H V H. Yahweh.
- God is present, in your breath. Within and around you. In your very being.

## **Tuesday 17th September**

- This is the day that the Lord has made. This day, the day you are living right now.
- As the worship hymn continues: 'let us rejoice and be glad in it'.
- It isn't always easy to rejoice or 'be glad', but the hymn writer is inviting us to recognise that today is a gift from God, and we can celebrate that – if nothing else.
- How are you celebrating the gift of today? How are you making use of it? How are you using it to offer worship to God?
- Pray about that this day, as you are out and about.

## **Wednesday 18th September**

God of all grace,  
Come and be known to me here, by your grace,  
Show me how to put your love to work in the world,  
Show me how to be a part of all that is good and wholesome and right,  
Show me how to share the good news of your love with people I meet,  
Show me how to follow you. Amen.

## **Thursday 19th September**

- This day, your prayers could be for our planet and the world we live in.
- This day, may you say sorry for all the ways you hurt and pollute the Earth.
- This day, you could use your times of prayer to reconnect with nature and to commit again to climate action, climate campaigning and climate justice.
- For resources and ideas to support your prayers – the All We Can or the Joint Public Issues website.

## **Friday 20th September**

- God of all blessings,  
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,  
For the flavours and the smells,
- The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.  
I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready meals in my freezer.  
And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for. Amen.

## **Saturday 21st September**

- Loving God, I pray for those close to me – those in my own family or friendship circle – who I know are in pain this day. Those suffering from grief, illness, loss, mental ill health or another source of pain and difficulty. You know their challenges, and are with them in their sufferings.
- Comforting God, who walks alongside those in pain, come, by your Spirit. Amen.