

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) You are just, O lord and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 89)

**ANTIPHON:** In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

**RESPONSE:** In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

**LECTOR:** You turn men back into dust and say: "Go back, sons of men." To your eyes a thousand years are like yesterday, come and gone, no more than a watch in the night. **R.**

**LECTOR:** You sweep men away like a dream, like grass which springs up in the morning. In the morning it springs up and flowers: by evening it withers and fades. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart. Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever? Show pity to your servants. **R.**

**LECTOR:** In the morning, fill us with your love; we shall exult and rejoice all our days. Let the favour of the Lord be upon us: give success to the work of our hands. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Let your face shine on your servant, and teach me your laws! Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) ) Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

**Or**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Wisdom 9:13-18; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14: 25-33

**NEXT WEEK** (The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Year C) Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 77; Phil 2:6-11; John 3:13-17

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## *Carrying the cross for Jesus*



**7 September 2025 23rd Sunday Year C**

The good news revealed by Jesus features a lot of demanding and at times scandalous teachings. As the writer of the first reading discerns, we probably would not have come to the same conclusions as God if we were in charge.

When it comes to living how God wants, "who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom, and sent your holy spirit from above?"

To be a Christian is to believe that God has shown us who he is and what he wants from us, even if that means embracing what the rest of the world derides as shameful foolishness.

The second reading presents a perfect example of the wisdom of God colliding with the wisdom of the age. Paul, writing from prison, exhorts a fellow Christian to welcome and free a runaway slave. This was a powerfully countercultural appeal in a status-obsessed Greco-Roman society where slavery was as common as owning cars or using electricity is today.

Runaway slaves could expect severe punishment or execution if they were caught. The culture was so dependent on the practice that the whole society stood against any showing any leniency to slaves. But Paul doesn't just ask Philemon to receive Onesimus and return to the status quo. He encourages him to free the runaway slave and embrace him as a brother.

The wisdom of God teaches that baptism into Christ establishes an identity that is apart from and superior to all other kinds of social and cultural affiliations. Paul is encouraging Philemon to reject the entire social and moral order that his

world was built upon, in order to testify to the love and wisdom of God.

In this week's gospel, Jesus takes it one step further and explains that following Him requires a willingness to hate even our own relatives. To be clear, Jesus is using a Jewish idiom that expresses hyperbole to indicate one's clear preference and priority. This is, after all, the same Jesus who commands us to love our enemies, let alone our own flesh and blood.

But the point still stands: God takes priority, even over every other good thing in our lives. Jesus is saying that to follow Him means not letting rejection and condemnation from the world, or even from our own loved ones, stop us from following Him.

There will be times in our lives when we face consequences for living the way God wants us to, whether it's because we're standing up to the social and moral injustices of our time or because we prioritise God over other things and people.

This is why Jesus said, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

If we believe that Jesus is who he says he is, the one who 'straightens our paths' and 'saves us by his wisdom', then let us join him on the road to Calvary and choose his ways over the ways of the world.

**Joseph Doyle**

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