

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O Lord, I trust in your merciful love. My heart will rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 102)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is kind and merciful.

RESPONSE: The Lord is kind and merciful.

LECTOR: My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. **R.**

LECTOR: It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals everyone of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults. **R.**

LECTOR: As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. As a father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Whoever keeps the word of Christ, grows perfect in the love of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) I will recount all your wonders, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

(Or) Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who is coming into this world.

TODAY'S READINGS Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Matthew 5:38-48

NEXT WEEK (1st Sunday Lent, Year A) Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Psalm 50; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Free Family Guides

Family Guide Resources, including free downloadable material and stories of interest for couples, parents and children are designed to help families cope with the stresses of modern day living. Articles and links cover a range of topics, including Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol, Pregnancy, Adolescents, Grief, Shame, Anxiety, Relationships, Marriage breakdown and Disabilities. The guides are now available on the new www.majellan.media website. We will continue to keep adding material to the Family Guide Resources over time. For more information go to www.majellan.media/guides/

Living a moral life



23 February 2020 7th Sunday Year A

Gordon Gekko, the infamous lead character in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, uttered the dictum, "Greed is good", which was to become the anthem for the decade of the 80s. Greed, or variously avarice and covetousness, are one of the Seven Deadly Sins, that popular list of "cardinal vices" that seem to have entered Catholic lore back in the 13th century.

The Seven Deadly Sins (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth) have left their imprint on art and literature over the centuries. They figure in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. Stephan Sondheim's musical *Getting Away with Murder*, Kurt Weill's opera and ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins*, as well as the 1995 movie *Se7en* all took the cardinal vices as their leitmotif.

The impetus behind this listing of sins is founded on the notion that simply following rules or laws is not enough to ensure a moral life. To live a moral life, one must cultivate virtuous habits and avoid habitual vices.

The same thought is woven through today's readings, where Moses, Jesus and Paul recommend the habitual practices of love over envy, mercy over wrath, and generosity over greed.

Such a lifestyle that seeks to foster the virtue of loving neighbour and enemy alike might seem foolish or unwise, as Paul notes.

It would appear to be counterintuitive to let one's guard down, to build bridges across economic, cultural and ideological boundaries, rather than to construct walls that perpetuate such divisions. It may also challenge our natural inclinations to be greedy and jealous of own ideas, culture and lifestyle. Being generous, merciful and inclusive may require us to give up some aspects of our cherished possessions.

Pope Francis has noted that human morality is akin to the maintenance of ecological balance in the world. Just as we can violate and compromise the environment by polluting our waterways and air with toxic waste, we can do violence to our moral ecology when we sully our relationships with discord, dissension, fear, mistrust and alienation.

Vices such as greed, wrath, pride, envy or more accurately avarice (Lt avarus, meaning "to crave"), becomes injurious to the moral ecology when "wanting more" or "wanting what others don't have" becomes obsessions that pollute and poison relationships with other people.

Today's readings ask us to reflect on our relationships and consider how our obsessions may be preventing us from a more fulfilling engagement with our neighbours and with God.