

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) All that you have done to us, O Lord, you have done with true judgement, for we have sinned against you and not obeyed your commandments. But give glory to your name and deal with us according to the bounty of your mercy.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 24)

ANTIPHON: Remember your mercies, O Lord.

RESPONSE: Remember your mercies, O Lord.

LECTOR: Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths. Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: for you are God my saviour. **R.**

LECTOR: Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth. In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord is good and upright. He shows the path to those who stray, he guides the humble in the right path; he teaches his way to the poor. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Remember your word to your servant, O Lord, by which you have given me hope. This is my comfort when I am brought low.

Or

By this we came to know the love of God: that Christ laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

TODAY'S READINGS Ezekiel 18:25-28; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21:28-32

NEXT WEEK (27th Sunday of Year A) Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 79; Philippians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43.

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Actions speak
louder than
words



27 September 2020 26th Sunday Year A

Many parents today could empathise with the father asking each of his two sons to work in their vineyard. It is not an unreasonable request. Presumably their livelihood relies on the income from the vineyard, and the father speaks not harshly but with affection, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today."

Jesus does not explain the motivation of the two sons, but the defiance of the first son in initially refusing to work in the vineyard would have hurt his father. Jesus does not say why the son then 'thought better of it' and went to work. Perhaps it was seeing the pain on his father's face. The point for Jesus is that he changed his mind. The second son instantly agreed to his father's request but then reneged.

As St Matthew recounts, Jesus is telling this story in a contest with the chief priests and elders of the people who have challenged his authority to be teaching and acting as he does. So, he tells this story and asks them to decide who did the father's will. Of course they answered: the one who went to work in the vineyard. In words that must have outraged his opponents, Jesus declares: 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you'. At that time, tax collectors collaborated with the Roman authorities and made money for themselves

as well. They were socially despised and outside the Jewish law, like the prostitutes.

Yet these despised people were among those who heard and believed the message of John the Baptist, 'a pattern of true righteousness', while the chief priests and elders, the very ones who should have been most alert to the message of John, refused to accept him. They were like the second son who said he would go to the vineyard, but then refused. Jesus is declaring that God's loving embrace is available to everyone, especially those who feel most excluded.

This incident of Jesus arguing with these religious leaders also carries a warning for us today. We too can be deaf to the unexpected call of God. Moreover, Jesus insists that responding to the father's will is not just a matter of words, but of action. Actions speak louder than words.

So we pray that God will truly walk with us, and help us live with insightful concern for others, especially in this traumatic year that has included extensive bushfires, COVID-19 and economic distress for many. Let us also embrace the call of Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* to play our part in protecting our planet and environment, while striving for a more just world with social and economic systems that serve everyone well.