

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 14)

**ANTIPHON:** The just will live in the presence of the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** The just will live in the presence of the Lord.

**LECTOR:** Lord, who shall dwell on your holy mountain? He who walks without fault; he who acts with justice and speaks the truth from his heart; he who does not slander with his tongue.

**R.**

**LECTOR:** He who does no wrong to his brother, who casts no slur on his neighbour, who holds the godless in disdain, but honours those who fear the Lord. **R.**

**LECTOR:** He who keeps his pledge, come what may; who takes no interest on a loan and accepts no bribes against the innocent. Such a man will stand firm for ever. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Happy are they who have kept the word with a generous heart and yield a harvest through perseverance. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him.

**Or**

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, says the Lord. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door to me, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Genesis 18:1-10; Colossians 1:24-28; Luke 10:38-42

**NEXT WEEK** (17th Sunday of Year C) Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 137; Colossians 2:12-14; Luke 11:1-13

*Brighten up  
your day with  
The Majellan*

### Praying with St Gerard

St Gerard Majella, a Redemptorist brother, has long been known as a helper of families, especially expectant mothers, new mothers, and children. You can ask him to support your petition by his prayers. Your request will be sent to Redemptorist communities in Australia so that they can pray for your intention in their Masses. Details at [www.majellan.media/your-prayers/](http://www.majellan.media/your-prayers/)



## Sacred quality of trees



17 July 2022 16th Sunday Year C

In the human religious imagination, a tree is often understood to be a symbol of the connection between heaven and earth: branches, spread out and covering all beneath them, are joined by a trunk to roots plunged deep into the ground. The foliage above gives shade and protection from the harsh heat of the day, and fruit for our nourishment. Besides water (which like fruit 'falls' from above) human survival depends on shelter and food, both of which the tree provides.

The terebinth tree, common in the Holy Land, manifests this sacred quality of trees: its thickly leaved branches, bearing berry-like fruit used in traditional medicine and cooking, span low and wide over the observer beneath them; its stubborn trunk rises out of the dry, rocky earth like a miracle.

In this way – seen from a spiritual point of view – the tree repeats the structure of the world, as sky and earth. Add to this the pungent resinous smell of the terebinth, and perhaps you have a sense of the setting for today's engrossing Old Testament reading: Abraham, camped under the terebinth of Mamre, is visited by three strangers, whom he graciously entertains, waiting on them, feeding them the best of what he has to offer. And conversing with them: they (or he: somehow the three persons are the appearing of the one God) make a promise that in a year's time Abraham's barren, elderly wife Sarah, who is well past her child-

bearing age, will have a son.

The gift of a son initiates the surprising way in which God, who called Abraham out of Babylonia to a different way of life, will fulfill his original promise to give Abraham uncountable descendants and to inherit the land in which he is camped and bring great blessing to all the world.

A people, a land, and universal blessing: all of this is meant to turn our minds back to the beginning of the bible when God created people, in a land (the tree-garden of Eden) and gave them a universal vocation based on a blessing. Abraham and Sarah, under the terebinth, are a New Adam and Eve, the renewal of God's original humanity project that sin threatened to derail.

This project culminates in Christ, the ultimate Adam, through whose 'tree' the universal blessing promised to Abraham comes to the world. From the Garden of Eden to the tree of the Cross to the New Creation (with its centrally placed Tree that nourishes and heals all), the story of redemption is marked at major moments by trees. Their interrelated symbolic significance contributes to the meaningful unity of the whole biblical epic.

Next time you are outside, spend a few contemplative minutes underneath a tree. It's not hard to see the cosmic beauty of that tree as a faint image of the coming 'world without end, amen' for which we are always praying.

W Chris Hackett

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