

A Devotion for the week to 26th of July 2020

This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for use in other retirement villages and nursing homes and for those who are interested, for their private use.

INTRODUCTION from Psalm 128, verse 1

Blessed are all who fear the Lord and walk in His ways.

HYMN No. 22 - All thing bright and beautiful

You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.

PRAYER

Today O Lord, we remember how good you have been to us over the course of our lives. Help us to know that, no matter what happens, even when it seems as if things are as bad as they can get, You are still with us and You care for us. We thank you for your presence with us, never failing; in the good times and the bad, ever loving and forgiving. Your presence never leaves us, even at those times when we have forgotten You and have gone our own way. Sometimes we are haunted by memories from times past, when we let somebody down. Even those times are covered by Your love and forgiveness through Jesus our Lord. And so, we thank you God, for forgiving us and for caring for us. Amen

HYMN No. 26 - I need thee every hour

BIBLE READING -

Romans 8 : 26 - 39 Please read the whole reading if you can, here is a very brief summary:

If God is for us, then who can be against us? Who or what can separate us from the love of God? Can trouble or hardship or danger? No! Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

REFLECTION

Today's reading from St.Paul's letter to the Romans is another of Paul's writings where he gets so enthusiastic that he goes on and on. You can feel his excitement as words pile upon words in his reflection on God's love and care.

He starts by writing that, in all things, "God works for the good of those who love Him". He then writes that "if God is for us, who can be against us?" This sound as if nothing can ever go wrong for the follower of God and that God will bless our lives with every good thing, with ease and comfort. This is not the case though. Paul goes on to say that not trouble, hardship, persecution or danger can separate us from God's love. Paul was not expecting that God would take trouble and challenges out of his life. If anything Paul was expecting to meet with more opposition rather than less. Paul's message here is not that God would take away your troubles, but that God would be with you in your troubles.

If you ask, God will give you courage, God will give you strength, God will give you confidence. Paul gives a list of troubles from the practical side of life then he gives a list of troubles from the spiritual side of life. Paul lists all the worst things he can think of, but follows those lists by writing

that none of those things can separate us from God's love. St.Paul did not put "pandemic" in his list of ills, but I am sure that he would have included it if he was writing this letter to us today.

Nothing in all creation is able to separate us from the love of God, not CoronaVirus, nor social distancing, nor travel restrictions. Be confident in God's love for you. Our present troubles will pass, but God's love will still be there. God will continue to love you, as He loves all of us, no matter what the challenge, now and for ever.

HYMN No. 6 - Jesu, lover of my soul

PRAYER

Father God, we ask that You would give us the confidence and faith we need to meet the challenges of our daily lives. Help us to be the kind of people you would want us to be. We pray for our friends and family, asking that you would be with them as you are with us. And may they be aware of our love and concern for them. Be with medical staff and emergency workers, give them strength and wisdom as they help the people who come to them. We pray for those who are ill, as we pray and those who worry about them. We pray for the staff here, our friends here, and for ourselves, that we might live happily and well together. And we pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No 2 - Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

The BLESSING

From the closing verses of Psalm 128 -

May the Lord bless you all the days of your life, and may you live to see your children's children.

And may the blessing of the almighty God,

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen