

Devotion for the week leading to the 20th of September 2020

This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale, but with the intention of also being available for private use.

From Psalm No. 105: 1-4

Give thanks to the Lord and call on Him. Sing praise to God and tell of His wonderful deeds. Give glory to Him and let those who seek Him rejoice. Look to the Lord always

HYMN No. 1 - All people that on earth do dwell

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

We thank you, O Lord that you have always been with us throughout our lives. You have been with us in those good times when we celebrated those things that went well for us. You have also been with us in those bad times and sad times when we have needed support and comfort. Help us to remember that you are always with us and that we can always rely on you. Your love for us is steadfast, and even if we complain or go the wrong way, your forgiveness is always greater than our failings. Thank you O God, for your never-failing love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN No. 26 - I need thee every hour

BIBLE READING - Exodus, chapter 16, verse 2 to verse 15

REFLECTION

Today's reading is a story from the time when the people of Israel had left Egypt and were wandering in the wilderness before they arrived in the promised land. At the time of today's story they were running low of food and they were starting to say how much better it had been back in Egypt! In fact, it had been terrible in Egypt, that is why they had left. They had been unpaid, underfed, overworked slave labour for Egyptian government building projects.

Isn't that typical, that so often when things are not perfect, we say to ourselves "wasn't it so much better back in the good old days". Our memories become idealised, we remember what was good, and we don't like to remember bad. I suppose that makes us happier people, but it does mean that our memories of times past are not as reliable as we might want them to be.

I remember my father telling me a story from his childhood on the family orchard in the Golburn Valley. At one time there was a snake living in the wall of the kitchen. They let it live there because it kept the rats and mice out of the kitchen. My father told this story as if the snake was almost a pet, but of course it would not have been. For my grandmother it must have been the lesser of a number of evils. I am certain she did not want rats and mice running around her kitchen. The lesson my father passed on to me was that snakes are not always bad, they have their place. The lesson I pass on to you is, do want to really live like that now,

having to choose between snakes and rodents in the house? The lesson the Bible reading passes on is, how quickly people forget what God has saved them from in the past.

Today's Bible reading concludes with Moses' prayer to God, telling of the people's complaints about the food shortage. God saw that the food problem was real and sent flocks of quail and sweet flakes that they collected to eat, that they called manna. God cared for them and continued to care for them, even when their faith was low. God cares for us today, even when we complain, and even when we think that things used to be better is days gone by.

HYMN No. 10 - Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation

PRAYER

Thank you, O Lord, that you are always ready to help us. Help us, we pray to be the kind of people you would want us to be. May we be those people here and now. Help us to be the best we can be in this time and place. We know, O God that you do not expect us to do what we cannot do, but help us to be positive, helpful people who do what we can to lift the spirits of those around us.

We pray for all those who are sick, and for those who care for them. We pray for all those who work here to make our lives safer and better. We pray for our families, that they might be safe, happy and well, wherever they are. Now let us take a moment to pray for those special situations and people that trouble us..... All these things, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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 7 - Count your blessings

The BLESSING

May God be with you in all that you do,

And may the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen