

Devotion for the week leading to the 18th of October 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 being available for any who are interested for their private use.

INTRODUCTION

This week our introduction comes from a new translation of Psalm 99: The Lord our God reigns over the world. Even when the earth quakes, fires rage or floods cover the land; even when the works of people's hands are laid low, God is Lord and master over all the earth.

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

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

O Lord our God, we thank you for this wonderful world and all the good things you have put in it that draw us towards you and show us your love and your power. Help us to see your creativity in the wonders of the world you have made, from the mighty beasts of the land and sea, to the delicacy of birds and butterflies. Help us to see your timelessness through the ancient mountains and cliffs; the sun, moon and stars. Help us to see your power through the mighty ocean and raging storms. Help us to see your steadfastness through your patience with the people of Israel, as you cared for them in good times and bad, from the time of Abraham to the time of Herod. Help us to see your love from the time of the first-created people, to your greatest revelation, Jesus Christ. We thank you and praise you O God for who you are and how you show yourself to us. Amen

HYMN No.7 - Count your blessings

REFLECTION

Today's reading is from first Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 1 to 10.

In this, St. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he begins by thanking them for their work and endurance. He had seen their faith in Jesus when he was with them and he had later heard about it in Macedonia and from even further away. He recounts those glowing reports he has heard about them. Here, St. Paul sets a great example for us of how to relate to other people. He tells them how proud he is of them. This is not a boastful pride, but a genuine appreciation of how well they have been living their faith. He tells them of the good reports he has received from others, not just from one person, but from a number of people from different places. It is not baseless flattery, it is real reporting back. It is well deserved encouragement.

The way St. Paul writes here can be an example for us to follow. If we know somebody who has been doing a good job, tell them so. It will make them feel better and it will make us feel good. It will also encourage them to continue to that good job and perhaps look for other things that can also be done well and helpfully. It encourages them to be a better person by reinforcing those things that are good and are appreciated. It can be very disheartening when people only ever tell us when we do things wrong. All we ever hear is that we are wrong and bad, and it does not actually tell us what is right and good. Rather than saying to someone "you are wrong", it is better to say to them "I think that is wrong, I think a better thing would be....." That way is less offensive to them personally and provides

some positive guidance. They are much more likely to listen to something said that way. But they are most likely to remember positive encouragement that thanks them for something particular they have done. That is the most likely thing to influence their behaviour, and it leaves you both feeling good instead of both feeling bad. So remember St. Paul's lesson and acknowledge people's good deeds easily, but always think twice and chose your words carefully before you condemn.

HYMN No.32 - Jesus wants me for a sunbeam

PRAYER

We come to you, O God our Father, as humans with our faults and failings. Forgive us, we ask, for those times when we have discouraged the well-meant attempts of others, for times when we have put others down. Forgive us too, for those times when we have not thanked others or encouraged them when we really have appreciated their efforts. We thank you O God for your care towards us over our lifetimes and we ask for your continued care. We pray also for our friends and families, and for those who help to care for us: for doctors and nurses, cleaners, those who do the shopping, those who do the paperwork, and those who tend the gardens. For all these people we thank you. For our place in this land, we thank you. For your continuing love towards us we thank you. We pray together -

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 6 - Jesus lover of my soul

The BLESSING

May God the creator of life, bring you love, peace and joy.

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