

## SUNDAY MASS

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face; I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

**FIRST READING:** Isaiah 55:10-11.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 65.

### RESPONSE:

The seed that fell into good soil yielded a hundredfold.

1. You visit the earth, give it water; you fill it with riches.  
God's ever-flowing river brims over to prepare the grain. **R**
2. And thus you provide for the earth; you drench its furrows; you level it, soften it with showers; you bless its growth. **R**
3. You crown the year with your bounty. Abundance flows in your pathways; in pastures of the desert it flows. **R**
4. The hills are girded with joy. The meadows clothed with flocks. The valleys are decked with wheat. They shout for joy; yes, they sing! **R**

**SECOND READING:** Romans 8:18-23.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia! The seed is the word of God, and the sower is Christ; all who find him will abide for ever. Alleluia.

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 13:1-23.

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young; at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, forever singing your praise.

Just as he encountered Mary Magdalene with the question, "Why are you weeping?", Jesus continues to come to those who mourn the death of loved ones.

A new and revised version of the very popular first edition, this book is offered in the hope that it will bring readers who are grappling with questions of faith and feelings of loss, into contact with the compassion of Jesus.



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## THE WEEK AHEAD

# Live the Word

### Mon 17 Jul Liturgy of the Day

Exodus 1:8-14:22; Psalm 124; Matthew 10:34-11:1

The Gospel has the power to deeply unite us to God, but another effect is that it can divide us from those who refuse to be united to God in the Truth. But we are not alone. Take courage, and do not lose heart.

### Tue 18 Jul Liturgy of the Day

Exodus 2:1-15; Psalm 69; Matthew 11:20-24

Sometimes we need a holy rebuke from Jesus, like Chorazin and Bethsaida received, to wake us up when we lose our way. Perhaps hear Jesus' words in today's Gospel as if they were directed at us.

### Wed 19 Jul Liturgy of the Day

Exodus 3:1-6.9-12; Psalm 103; Matthew 11:25-27

Jesus implies in today's Gospel that it is not good to be arrogant and a know-it-all, having all the answers. Rather, we must remain open, curious and willing to learn – like a child.

### Thu 20 Jul (St Apollinaris, BM)

Exodus 3:13-20; Psalm 105; Matthew 11:28-30

What is it that burdens you or weighs you down? Respond to that gentle invitation from Jesus: "Come to me." Come to him without fear and without hesitation. Turn everything over to him in confidence and trust.

### Fri 21 Jul (St Lawrence of Brindisi, PrD)

Exodus 11:10-12:14; Psalm 116; Matthew 12:1-8

Jesus calls us to always interpret God's law through the eyes of mercy. Do you see it as a legalistic and burdensome requirement, or do you see it as a blessing of God's mercy meant to lighten your load?

### Sat 22 Jul ST MARY MAGDALENE

Song 3:1-4; Psalm 63; John 20:1-2.11-18

Imagine that you are right there at Jesus' tomb early on that first Easter morning. What are your feelings, thoughts and emotions both before and after Jesus calls your name? How do you respond?

### Sun 23 Jul 16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wisdom 12:13.16-19; Psalm 86; Matthew 13:24-43

"We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves, and we are not at peace with God." – Thomas Merton

(KEY: SOLEMNITY; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial) B=Bishop; M=Martyr; Pr=Priest; D=Doctor)

# Catholic Link

## GOD WHO HEALS

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A  
Divine Office: Week III • 16 July 2023

# Mental Illness and Mental Health



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

Questions concerning the mind are shrouded in wordplay. Today we seldom talk of madness, crazies, lunatics, asylums, shrinks or loony-bins. We talk more correctly about mental health, and where appropriate, mental illness. But what do we mean?

Talking about questions of the mind is more difficult than talking about questions of the body. Bodily symptoms of illness are easier to measure – blood sugar, blood pressure, heart rate, muscle strength and bone density. But what are the symptoms of a distressed or disturbed mind? Irritability, lack of concentration, mood swings, sleep disturbance, sudden weight change and a pre-occupation with suicide are all symptoms – some easier to measure and describe than others. But even symptomatic words like depression are difficult to pin down. Depression can range from sadness, through a kind of suffocating greyness, to experiencing a deep black hole where light has vanished, or the feeling that death is the only pathway to relief. Then there are the symptoms of hearing voices, speaking to unseen presences, acting out wild mood swings, and engaging repeatedly in risky behaviour. All of these have, over the centuries, caused people to fear disturbances of the mind. In Jesus' time, we hear of people suffering from in-dwelling bad spirits or demons. Biblical scholars suggest that many of these were the mentally distressed people of his day. We still use the phrase that someone is in "poor spirits".

Given the wide range of experience related to mental distress, we can expect different

descriptions and therapies. Foremost though, is to dispel fear and silence. Mental distress is as old as humanity and needs to be brought out into the light, talked about, and acknowledged, so that we can discover pathways to healing. There are different levels and kinds of mental distress. If we are facing poor bodily health and pain, or difficulties such as the death of a loved-one, financial burdens or divorce, it can be enough to offer a listening ear, the comfort of company, or sharing a book or poem that carries a message of comfort. If distress is persistent and deeper, it can need psychological and/or medical support. Medication can be helpful, and psychotherapy or counseling offer ways to reflect on our lives, seeking to understand how we have come to be who and how we are. Sometimes we may need the more intensive interventions of specialists and hospitals.

When we are in mental distress we often feel alone and fearful. It is hard to explain our experience. We fear that we will be judged, that acknowledging mental illness could prejudice our employment, or chances of career advancement, or relationships. But usually, it is the comfort of others who "walk beside" us that offers most comfort. We can each choose to walk the Emmaus Road with a person who is suffering from mental distress. Jesus walked alongside his distressed disciples, whom St Luke describes with "faces downcast". Jesus listened. He asked questions. He shared his wisdom and insights. He sat down to meal. He revealed his presence – on the road, and in their home. We can learn to "be there" too.