

Reading for Weekday in the Seventh Week of Ordinary Time

21st May 2024

First reading

James 4:1-10

Resist the devil and he will run away

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

You are as unfaithful as adulterous wives; don't you realise that making the world your friend is making God your enemy? Anyone who chooses the world for his friend turns himself into God's enemy. Surely you don't think scripture is wrong when it says: the spirit which he sent to live in us wants us for himself alone? But he has been even more generous to us, as scripture says: God opposes the proud but he gives generously to the humble. Give in to God, then; resist the devil, and he will run away from you. The nearer you go to God, the nearer he will come to you. Clean your hands, you sinners, and clear your minds, you waverers. Look at your wretched condition, and weep for it in misery; be miserable instead of laughing, gloomy instead of happy. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 54(55):7-11,23

Entrust your cares to the Lord and he will support you.

O that I had wings like a dove
to fly away and be at rest.
So I would escape far away
and take refuge in the desert.

I would hasten to find a shelter
from the raging wind,
from the destructive storm, O Lord,
and from their plotting tongues.

For I can see nothing but violence
and strife in the city.
Night and day they patrol
high on the city walls.

Entrust your cares to the Lord
and he will support you.
He will never allow
the just man to stumble.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn14:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Mark 9:30-37

Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me

Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all.' He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

The call to welcome a child as one would welcome Jesus himself is to be taken seriously. It says that we can find him in surprising ways and among the simplest people. Just as children easily find other children and quickly begin to enjoy them as playmates, so we should respect those who are least self-important. Childhood in this sense is not a matter of age only. A person who is lonely may also be waiting for the healing touch of kindness. To welcome Jesus as a child is to open one's arms to those who need us.

In the text from James we have moved on from the child's world. He talks about "conflicts and disputes," murder and envy. He holds that the high road to salvation is this: "God resists the proud but shows favour to the lowly." This is a quote from Proverbs, 3:34 (Greek version). James draws from Jewish wisdom circulating in his time, to fill out the message of Jesus.