



## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 28th July 2019

In England and Wales

Prayer for respect and sanctity for all living things

Keynote: Jesus teacher of faith and prayer

### Book of Genesis 18: 20-32

The ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are symbols of all that is evil; their destruction by God may seem only just. Yet Abraham – our father in faith – is seen bargaining with God, to see if God will be just and fair, both to the sinner, and also to the good people of the cities, *'Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just people in the city... forty-five... or only ten just men in the city? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think it!'* God promises not to destroy the city, for the sake of the ten just men. In Abraham's day, as now, people 'test' God with the problem of evil. Troubled by evil events, sickness, natural disaster or death, we blame God, forgetting to acknowledge God's goodness, whenever good happens. For me it is the intimate relationship of faith that exists between Abraham and God in this encounter that is truly important. Trust and faith is at the very heart of prayer *'I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak...'* Perhaps like Abraham, when troubled or distressed by life we can enter into that prayerful relationship with God, who is truly a just and loving father.

**Responsorial Psalm 137** (138) – a song of thanksgiving to the faithful God

### Letter of Paul to the Colossians 2: 12-14

The apostle Paul presents us with the real meaning of our baptism in Christ, *'You have been buried with Christ, when you were baptised,'* says the apostle, *'and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead.'* Any sin, every record of the debt that we had to pay has been cancelled: *'he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.'* We have already begun this life of the resurrection, *'You were dead, because you were sinners... he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins.'* Our relationship with God begins with this realisation of our freedom, our joy in that knowledge, our sense of gratitude of what God has done for us. The realisation of our own experience of the mercy of God.

### Gospel according to Luke 11: 1-13

Every religious community has its own distinctive forms of prayer. The disciples said to Jesus, *'Lord, teach us how to pray.'* Luke presents us with the prayer given us by Jesus, *'Say this when you pray... Father, may your name be held holy...'* Attached to this passage, which we know as *'The Lord's Prayer'*, there is the parable of the man from next door who comes knocking at his neighbour's house in the middle of the night looking for bread to give to the unexpected guest. The parable is about persistent prayer, about not giving up, about continuing the search, about the need to keep beating at the door. Often we see prayer, as matter of petition, of asking. We should not lose sight of the real content of the Lord's Prayer itself, which is chiefly about being thankful, about that intimate relationship of trust and friendship illustrated in the first reading today. Let us then, be grateful to the *'Father in heaven... who gives us daily bread... forgives us our sins... and does not put us to the test.'*