

Thought for the week
26 July 2020
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lord Jesus Christ,
our Divine Physician,

we ask you to guard and protect us
and all people from the
coronavirus and all serious illness.

For all who have died from it ,
have mercy;

For all who are ill now,
bring healing;

For all searching for a remedy,
enlighten them;

For medical caregivers, helping the sick,
strengthen and shield them;

For all working to contain the spread,
grant them success;

For those afraid,
grant peace of mind.

By your grace,
may you turn the evil of disease
into moments of consolation and hope.

We abandon ourselves into your
infinite mercy.

Amen.

'What would you like me to give you?'

That's a huge question that God asks the young and inexperienced Solomon, who has been chosen to succeed King David and lead God's people. In today's reading from the Hebrew scriptures, rather than asking for long life, health, or success in battle, Solomon asks for the gift of '*a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil*'. He is, it seems already a wise young man, asking in humility for what he knows he most needs. God grants his request abundantly, and gives him discerning judgement.

The ability to discern between good and evil is something we all need, whatever path we are called to follow. It is a process that helps us to take wise decisions, and is a key element of what has become known as 'Ignatian spirituality', a way of prayer and of being grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola, whose feast day we celebrate on Friday.

Interestingly, Ignatius encourages us to begin our prayer by asking God for the grace we most desire. It can take time to look deep into ourselves and realise that our deepest desires are also our greatest spiritual needs, and are precisely the gifts that God wants to give us.

It is in the depths of the heart that we may observe the work of the good spirit leading us gently towards God and God's kingdom; and there too we may hope to recognise how the evil spirit can slip in and subtly draw us away from God.

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.' The field may be understood as an image of the heart, where we meet God in our needs and desires, our hopes and dreams; it is indeed worth selling up for, and is more precious even than long life or riches.

I try to imagine hearing God ask me that question. How would I answer?

Cecilia B



Prayers Please

Maddy Sharman has asked for our prayers.

Thank you for your prayers for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has left hospital after spending 102 days there, but he is still recovering from the coronavirus.

Please pray for Caroline Mikhail (daughter – in - law of Jane and Ramsay Mikhail) who suffered a stroke and has been taken into hospital in Plymouth.

Please pray for Peter Bussell who has Alzheimer's disease and is now being cared for at The Order of St John Charitable trust in Wallingford

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for Jean's great grandson Rogan who is 7 and has recently started chemotherapy for leukaemia.

Please pray for Ted Cotter (brother of Philomena) who has cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy.

Please pray for Irenka's sister Ludmila Morris who is a teacher and for all teachers as they continue to teach under difficult conditions

Please pray for children under stress.

Please pray for the residents and staff at the two nursing homes in our parish, Abbeycrest and St Luke's.

Please pray for all victims of the Coronavirus.



Please also remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including; Michael Collins, Kitty Minter, Rosita Smith, David Andrews, Kathleen Butler, Edward Cottrell, Jimmy Minter, Brian Stratmore Cleary, Patrick O'Flaherty-Hilder, Brian Mudge, Shirley Anderson-Williams, Joseph Brown, Jeanette Fernandes, James Fornara, Euralia Antao, Edward Jenkins, Carol Tegg, Rachel De Souza, Margaret Green, Martin Lousley, Frank Ryan.