

Wednesday 1 July

Today is Wednesday the 1 July, in the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time.

The University of Johannesburg choir conducted by Renette Bouwer sing the Kyrie from Missa De Meridiana Terra: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy. These imploring words, which have been sung for centuries, are a reminder of the inexhaustible mercy of God, of God's unfailing compassion and forgiveness. As I listen, I might think for a moment about my need for that forgiveness, and the need, too, for me to show that same forgiveness to others.

Today's reading is from the Prophet Amos.

Amos 5:14-15, 21-24

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

Harsh words from the God of love! But they come out of love, love for all the world, love especially for the poor and the vulnerable. When God sees his children exploited and impoverished, there is no ritual observance, no pious sacrifice, that can appease Him. What is it that stops me from sharing in God's love for the outcast and those on the edges of society?

Do I just accept that the world is unjust? Am I scared to lose out myself? Have I got "better things" to worry about? Or does the poverty of so many overwhelm me?

As you hear those words of God again, remember that God challenges those He loves; he wants us to grow and to share in his joy and love. The passion of his anger is also the passion of his forgiveness. As you listen, allow that passion to stir in your heart.

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream." Today I can at least let these words touch me, even if they make me feel uncomfortable or angry. Speak to God out of your feelings – or your lack of feelings. Tell him what is in your heart. Ask for the help of his grace.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.