

Reading for Weekday in the Second Week of Ordinary Time

22nd January 2025

First reading

Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17

‘You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.’

Brothers and Sisters: Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.

This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, ‘You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 110(109):1. 2. 3. 4. R4bc

You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord’s revelation to my lord:

‘Sit at my right hand,
until I make your foes your footstool.’

The Lord will send from Sion

your sceptre of power:

rule in the midst of your foes.

With you is princely rule

on the day of your power.

In holy splendour, from the womb before the dawn,

I have begotten you.

The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change:

‘You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Matthew 4:23

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom
and healed every affliction among the people.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 3:1-6

‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to save life or to kill?’

At that time: Again Jesus entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, ‘Come here.’ And he said to them, ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?’ But they were silent. And he looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Jesus declares that works of love and mercy may and should be done on the Lord's Day. He himself does God's work on the Sabbath by healing the withered hand of a man in the synagogue. Yet, perversely, some religious and political leaders began to plot together to destroy Jesus, for doing such an unorthodox thing. This is just in the third chapter of Mark's gospel, and, yet, it points ahead to the end of the gospel story. It was because Jesus was dedicated to doing God's work among the poor and the marginalised that he was crucified.

Jesus' life shows clearly that good works do not always bring their proper reward in this life. It is a strange paradox, but one that is often true to life, that good can sometimes provoke an evil response. The goodness of some brings out evil in others. Yet Jesus teaches us that goodness is its own reward. He himself persisted in the good work that God gave him to do, regardless of his hostile reception by the authorities. We try to be faithful to what is right, because it is what God wants of us and not because of any praise it might bring us. We remain faithful to our calling to share in Jesus' work of bringing healing and life to others, no matter what it may cost.