

PREGO PLUS: BACKGROUND NOTES

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

Psalm 15 (16)

Today's psalm is an individual song of trust and delight in the Lord.

The reference to 'my portion' (refrain and first stanza) suggests that the psalmist was a Levite: the Book of Joshua explains how the land was divided between the 12 tribes of Israel (Joshua 13–19), each having a 'portion' of the land – except the tribe of Levi, whose portion is God himself:

The Lord said to Aaron: 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, no portion of it among them shall be yours. It is I who will be your portion and your inheritance among the Sons of Israel.' (Numbers 18: 20).

The psalmist competes with pagan cults for the loyalty of the people around Jerusalem. In such an atmosphere, his reputation was under attack, but his faith remains steadfast, sure that he is the Lord's 'beloved'.

This explains the close intimacy of the relationship between the psalmist and the Lord. For him the Lord is 'my portion, my cup, my prize, my right hand' etc.



This psalm is also quoted twice in the Acts of the Apostles using the Greek translation of the Septuagint (Acts 2: 25, 29–31 and 13: 35).



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Gospel Luke 9: 51–62

Jesus resolutely took the road to Jerusalem... the Samaritan people would not receive him.

The direct route from Galilee to Jerusalem led through Samaria, but most Jews avoided it due to a long-standing dispute between the Jews and Samaritans (John 4: 9). Samaritans would do anything to prevent pilgrims from passing through their territory. For Jesus to travel by this route and to attempt to find hospitality there was unusual. He was extending a hand of friendship, which was refused.

Lord do you want us to call down fire from heaven ...?

James and John must have felt justified in their desire to destroy the inhospitable village. But as his companions seek revenge, Jesus shows tolerance: he rebukes them and walks away.

I will follow you wherever you go

As Jesus and his companions take another route they meet three people, one of whom would follow Jesus immediately, and two who want to delay before they accept Jesus's invitation. Neither Jesus's companions nor those who desire to follow him have fully understood the meaning of his Kingdom and what it means to be a disciple. Jesus's replies are intended to give them a greater understanding.

The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head

Jesus's reply to the first man cautions him to count the cost of following Jesus, giving a realistic view of what true discipleship entails.

Leave the dead to bury their dead ...

Jesus is making the point that there are crucial moments when a life-changing decision can no longer be put off.

Once the hand is laid on the plough ...

It is literally true that no one can plough a straight furrow while looking over their shoulder. If we choose to follow Christ, there is no looking back.

