

Homily 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) 2026

**“God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”
(1 John 4:16)**

Perhaps we have too restricted an understanding of what constitutes prayer. The old catechism answer on which we tend to base our understanding of prayer is, ‘Prayer is the raising up of the mind and heart to God.’ This is particularly true of contemplative based prayer, and many engage privately in this method. Yet prayer can be a family holiday where family members enjoy one another’s company and in so doing praise and thank God for one another and for the wonders of creation. A dinner with friends at home where good company and a shared meal around a table allows God to break into the sometimes-relentless pace of working life. A night out with mates where buddies exchange humorous stories of family life, work and sporting heroes in a spirit of respectful camaraderie all can be a forms of prayer.

St Matthew quotes Jesus, at the end of today’s Gospel, ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there also.’ Furthermore, in Ignatian spirituality the goal of life is ‘to find God in all things and in all people.’ Our God is an ‘Everyday God’, writes JG Davies (Davies, JG, S M Press, 1973), who breaks into even the most seemingly secular life events. * Indeed, ‘wherever two or three are gathered together in love I am with them.’

God is also present when we honestly and sincerely, with love in our hearts, challenge a sister or brother in Christ about her/his behaviour. Jesus tells us, in today’s Gospel, ‘If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile.’

Ezekiel in today’s First Reading is even more direct about this when he states that God’s Chosen People must be called back when they stray from The Covenant, ‘So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel, you shall give them warning from me. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.’

This, according to St Paul in today’s Letter to The Romans, must always be done with selfless love (agape) in our hearts. “Owe no one anything, except love. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. summed up in these words, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbour.” (Rom 13:8-10)

In summary where there is love of neighbour there is prayer and where there is loving prayer there is God.

How stunningly beautiful is that.

* **J. G. Davies' *Everyday God* (1973)**, its central argument can be summarised as follows:

- **God is encountered in ordinary life**, not only in church services or explicitly religious experiences. Davies challenges the tendency to separate the “sacred” from the “secular.”
- **Everyday human activities and relationships can be places of divine encounter.** Work, community, family, politics, art, and engagement with the world can all have theological significance.
- **Worship should connect with ordinary existence.** Christian worship should not be an isolated religious activity but should help people recognise God's presence in their daily lives.
- **The world itself has sacramental potential.** Ordinary things and experiences can point beyond themselves toward God when they are approached with awareness and faith.
- **Christian discipleship therefore involves engagement with the world.** Davies resists a purely inward or church-centred Christianity and emphasises responsibility for society and the wider human community.
- The underlying theological movement is **from “God in church” to “God in everyday life”**—a broadening of where and how divine presence is understood.

In one sentence: Davies argues that Christianity should recover an awareness of **God's presence within ordinary human life**, so that worship and daily living are understood as intimately connected rather than as separate spheres.