

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time – C

- Did you hear the pattern in the readings today?
 - This is from the first reading from Sirach:

“The Lord hears the cry of the oppressed. The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan, nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint. The one who serves God willingly is heard, his petition reaches the heavens. The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds, it does not rest until it reaches its goal”
 - The orphan, the widow, the abandoned cry out and God hears them
- Then the 2nd reading - St. Paul recalls being in prison – for being Christian
 - He had returned to Jerusalem to consult with the 12
 - He had gone to the temple to pray
 - Those who were against Christianity saw Paul and told the Jews
 - They began to beat him up
 - Police were called and the Centurions carried him over the crowd
 - He’s brought before the Roman Tribune & High Priest demands death
 - Forty leaders in the Sanhedran vow to fast until Paul is executed
 - Paul is left alone
 - THIS IS FROM TODAY’S 2nd Reading

“At my first defense, no one appeared on my behalf, everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the proclamation might be completed and all the Gentiles might hear it.”

 - ALONE and helpless, Paul calls for help and was heard.
- Then the Gospel -
 - The tax collector in the Gospel is suffering the pains of sin
 - He worked for Rome, collecting taxes from his own people
 - He was a thief, demanding more from the Jews than the Romans asked
 - He used the Roman guards to enforce his arbitrary decisions
 - Now he was rich – but he was alone.
 - No friends - despised by Jews, tolerated by Rome
 - Family hated him, the people hated him, He hated himself
 - Surely God must hate him – So he slips into temple and asks forgiveness
 - And God hears him.
 - Now WE come before God – like Paul in prison – like the widow & orphan – like tax collector – we all have our sin – and come just like the tax collector
 - Our sin can leave us isolated
 - We may have lost friends because of things we have said
 - We may have destroyed relationships because of selfishness
 - We haven’t loved as we should
 - So WE come to God knowing our need
 - And He hears us – Just like Paul – like the widow – & the tax collector
 - He responds by being Emmanuel “God with us”
 - He fills our emptiness, stands with us, despite our sin
 - WE all sin – and we can feel alone just like the tax collector
 - “Alone, but together”, we come as a community of faith
 - We know our sin, but together we come to the table and are fed
 - We pray with the tax collector:
 - Have mercy on me a sinner - Come Lord Jesus
 - Fill us to overflowing that we might overflow onto all we meet
 - That all creation might know the saving power of God
 - That all creation might know what we know, what the tax collector discovered
 - that salvation comes from forgiveness of sin