

Thought for the Day

Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.

For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>

Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)

Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.

Saturday 21 March

Luke 18.9-14

I remember a wise nun leading a Quiet Day at Theological College and telling us ordinands, 'Pray as you can, not as you can't.' Wise words indeed. There are many ways of praying and we can explore and find out what is best for us. Today's gospel gives us a lesson on prayer, and typically, Jesus challenges some conventions. 'Who is best at praying, Pharisees or tax collectors?'- This would not usually be the hardest quiz question. But Jesus turns this on its head. The contrast between the two people at prayer could not be greater. The religious expert priding himself on his credentials and despising others; the unclean collaborator with the Romans recognising his guilt and shame before God. And it was the despised tax collector who went home in a right relationship with God. His prayer was brief and simple. It was also honest, authentic, and open before God. This is a model for all of us and perhaps a salutary reminder at a time when we are unable to gather for worship. The simplest, heartfelt prayer is heard by God. This is not an area where training, expertise, qualifications, really apply. The youngest child can pray as well as the most experienced adult, sinners as well as saints. Pray as you can, not as you can't. And each of us *can* pray.

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort,
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*