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## ORDINARY 23C

7th September 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Hymn:

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us – [YouTube](#)

## Opening Prayers

Here I am, Lord God, and you are here with me.

Here I am, connected with you,

Oh Holy Trinity, and you are gathered in this space, with me.

As you invite me into the miracle of the divine-relationship, three-in-one,

So let me notice you at work in my life, my community, my church,

By your Spirit,

I pray

Amen.

**You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar**

**Reading:** Luke 14:25-33 – [Click for reading](#)

## Reflections on the reading

This week's gospel reading is not an easy one. Luke 14:25–33 makes us stop in our tracks. Jesus turns to the large crowds following Him and says things that sound, at first, quite shocking: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters... cannot be my disciple."

What do we do with a passage like this: especially as people who value inclusion, compassion, and grace?

It helps to remember that Jesus often uses bold, unsettling language to wake us up. The word "hate" here isn't about rejecting our loved ones. It is a way of saying: your commitment to this path needs to come before anything else. In a world where following Jesus can mean swimming against the current, choosing the way of love and justice may at times put us at odds with social expectations, even with people we care about.

Jesus is honest about the cost. Discipleship isn't just about inspiration or feeling good, it's about intention. Depth. Sacrifice. It's about taking up a cross: not in a way that glorifies suffering, but in a way that asks us to lay down ego, comfort, and control so that we can live more fully into grace.

Discipleship is not something we do lightly or half-heartedly. Following Jesus means aligning our lives with the values of his kingdom: radical love, nonviolence, equity, truth, humility. And sometimes, that will cost us something. It might mean letting go of our need to be liked, to stay safe, or to stay silent.

Jesus uses two practical images to make his point: a builder and a king. No one begins a project or a battle without first counting the cost. In the same way, we're invited to look clearly and courageously at what this journey of faith might ask of us: and to choose it anyway, not because it's easy, but because it's worth it.

So today, take a moment to reflect:

- What might I need to release in order to follow Jesus more freely?
- Where is discipleship asking me to take a stand, even if it's uncomfortable?
- How can I count the cost honestly—without fear, but with faith?

Discipleship is not a burden, but a bold invitation. It's not about rejecting others, but about living from a deeper centre. A life shaped not by fear or status, but by love.

May we walk this path with courage, grace, and a willingness to say yes, even when it costs.

### **Hymn:**

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you – [YouTube](#)

### **Blessing**

And so I go forth, travelling in your name, O God,  
 Powered by your grace, O Christ,  
 Looking for your guidance, O Spirit.

Help me to follow in your way this week and in the weeks ahead,  
 In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.

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## **Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week**

### **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

- God of all grace,  
 Show me how to play my part in bringing about a better, safer world,  
 And how to respond most appropriately to the climate crisis all around me.  
 Bring me hope, healing and love, this day, I pray.  
 Amen.

### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

- All around us are opportunities to notice God at work. Today, take a look out for little moments of encounter and spirituality. It might be a conversation, a flower, a change in the weather, or something else entirely.

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

- Today, you may wish to offer prayers for all involved in bringing food to our tables. From farmers to supermarket workers, people doing shifts in factories to lorry drivers – there is a whole industry around keeping us fed and hydrated.
- Notice a part of this journey today, perhaps when you are out buying groceries, or reading the label on some food you eat, and pray into it.

### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September**

- Today marks the anniversary of the terrible attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, an act of terrorism that caused a huge loss of life and continue to affect geopolitics today.
- Today, let our prayers be for peace and healing around the world – for all in positions of power and influence to work towards harmony, not violence.
- And for all still living with the impacts of that fateful day in New York, those who are still grieving and traumatised.

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September**

- Today, find a moment simply to be still.
- Sit, or lie down, and keep your hands empty, your eyes closed, try to clear your mind and simply be.
- This is a form of prayer, and is also a healthy practice to build up in ourselves, stilling the 'monkey mind' of busy-ness for a few minutes. How long can you stay there today?

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September**

- As the weekend begins, may you use this time to take action for justice and peace, particularly looking out for opportunities to respond to the needs you have recognised in your own community.
- God has called you to this time and this place – how will you respond?