

## 26<sup>th</sup> October, Monday week 30 in ordinary time

### Psalm 1:1-4,6

Happy indeed is the man  
who follows not the counsel of the  
wicked;  
nor lingers in the way of sinners  
nor sits in the company of  
scorners,  
but whose delight is the law of the  
Lord  
and who ponders his law, day and  
night.

He is like a tree that is planted  
beside the flowing waters,  
that yields its fruit in due season  
and whose leaves shall never fade;



and all that he does shall  
prosper.

Not so are the wicked, not  
so!

For they like winnowed  
chaff  
shall be driven away by  
the wind:  
for the Lord guards the  
way of the just  
but the way of the wicked  
leads to doom.

Let's just focus on the Psalm today. The "Responsorial Psalm" is in fact a response to the first reading, so it either develops the theme or is a response of penitence, joy or some other reaction. Today's first reading from the letter to the Ephesians exhorts us to follow and imitate Christ and the Psalm expands on this, giving us beautiful images of how this is possible.

The first stanza begins with "happy is the man" (or person). Our happiness comes from delighting in the Lord, not from following those whom we know are doing wrong, or the counsel of the wicked or even of those who scorn our faith. Evil is glorified so much in our society – just look at how "Halloween" (All Hallow's Eve, i.e. the eve of All Saints Day) focuses on so much that is evil in our society, using dark and frightening images, all for so called fun!

This Psalm shows us that in fact our delight is in the Lord's law. That is who the saints are – those who delighted in God's law and lived it out; loving God and neighbour by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The word "ponder" shows us that it is not enough just to hear the law, but we need to think about its implications for our everyday lives.

The second stanza gives us this wonderful image of an evergreen tree by flowing water, always drawing strength from the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that whoever drinks the water which flows from Him will never thirst again (c.f. Jn. 4:14). He sends the Holy Spirit, our "water" by which we are fulfilled and kept in spiritual health, like the evergreen tree.

The third stanza warns us not to be lightweight like chaff, the part of the corn which is no good and is blown away by the wind. We need to take God's Law seriously and continuously draw upon it.

With its wonderful imagery of the tree's roots drawing on the water of life, we are reminded that regular reading and pondering on the words of Sacred Scripture, as we are doing now, gives us a solidity and steadfastness that keeps us in Christ, who leads us to His Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit. (Carol Ann Harnett)