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4 Wednesday

WEDNESDAY, Week 9 of the Year

2 Tim 1: 1 – 3, 6 - 12

Ps 122: 1 - 2

Mark 12: 18 - 27

All of St Paul's letters include somewhere in them a blessing and a prayer for those the letter is addressed to. It was the common practice in letter-writing of those days, something we've maybe largely forgotten nowadays, with our text-messaging and urgency for the shortest, quickest and most abbreviated communication. Some of those prayers of St Paul are specially rich and beautiful, whether we pray them for ourselves or for others.

Today's first liturgical reading gives us the start of Paul's second letter to his disciple, colleague and friend Timothy. And he starts by telling Timothy how fervently he always prays for him. As we read or listen to it let's take it as addressed to ourselves, a reminder of our connections and relationships together in Christ.

It's a Christian practice to ask people to pray for us, and we also promise to pray for friends or others who ask our prayers. How fervently do we do all this? Listen how St Paul remembered Timothy in his prayers; and how he reminds his friend to "fan into a flame" the gift that God had given him.. Does our gift of faith, fellowship and love need to be fanned into a flame too? The gift is not a spirit of fearfulness but of power and love. It's a grace of God, not our own doing. So we should be praying with great assurance and confidence, because it's not our own "goodness" we rely on but God's gift. Even in face of hardships and suffering, let's never forget Who it is we trust in, the One who cares for us and those we commend to Him.

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