

**Lectionary readings: Isaiah 49: 1-7; Psalm 40: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9; John 1: 29-42**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Isaiah 49:** God says, *'You are my servant, and you will bring me glory.'* This is one of the Servant Songs. Whoever the servant is - and that is not stated - we are all servants of God, specially chosen and called, known personally to God, and called to let God's presence shine through our lives. God calls each one of us by name, for He knows us intimately, and we are all precious to Him. Is this the God you know - not a God who is far off, but a God who wants an intimate relationship with you? How can you cultivate a deeper relationship with God this week?
- **Psalm 40:** *'I waited patiently for the Beloved.'* (v1) I wonder, if we had an image of God as our Beloved, whether we would be more inclined to spend time with Him, knowing that He cares deeply for us and everything He allows in our lives He allows out of love? We might like to reflect this week on what kind of God we worship, how much time we give to God each day and what steps we might take to develop a deep, loving relationship with Him? Here are two more verses for us to reflect on: *'I delight to abandon myself into Your hands, O my Beloved; for You are the Heart of my heart.'* (v8) *'My only hope is in Your unfailing love and faithfulness.'* (v11) (Psalms for Praying)
- **1 Corinthians 1:** Paul says that he has been called by Jesus - as we have all been called, each of us with a different task to do, according to our gifts. He goes on to say that Christians are *'set apart for a God-filled life'*.

(The Message) We have been invited, Paul says, into a *'wonderful friendship'* or, as The Message has it, a *'spiritual adventure'*. Is this how we see the Christian life - as a wonderful friendship with God, an exciting spiritual adventure? Paul says that we have everything we need to live this life of faith because God has given us His Spirit, and so we have every spiritual gift we need - unlimited abundance; and all we have to do is tap into God within us and receive strength, peace, joy, courage, or whatever our particular need is at any given time. This is worthy of reflection this week as we continue our journey through life.

- **John 1:** John the Baptist speaks of his baptism as a means of enabling people to *'get a fresh start with God'*. (v31 The Message) A new year, indeed each day, each moment is an opportunity for a fresh start with God. Jesus asked the two disciples following Him, *'What do you want?'* Why not hear Jesus address that question to you this week? What are you looking for? What are you longing for? What are the deep desires of your heart? Share these with Jesus and wait patiently in silence for what He might want to say to you in reply. The disciples went to stay with Jesus for the rest of the day. They were willing to spend time in Jesus' company, listening to Him, sharing with Him, imbibing His presence, watching how He conducted Himself. It might be good to reflect on how we can give more time each day to be with Jesus, how we might share our whole day with Him.

**A prayer**

Lord, thank You that You have chosen me and called me because You think I am special. Open my ears to Your voice and my heart to Your love that I might give myself fully to You and to others. Amen.