



THE LORD'S DAY

5th Sunday of Easter (Year A)

The Watermead Apostolate offers this weekly page as a helpful guide and background to the readings used at the Catholic Mass for each Sunday of the Year.

The reading guides were written by Fr John Daley (RIP) who served as a Catholic priest in various parishes around the UK and world for 53 years.

Fr John co-founded Watermead in 1992 as a voice for people who wished to share understanding of living their faith through their God-given gifts and talents.

'The Lord's Day' incorporates some of those voices in this presentation and also through its many publications ~ books, resources, cards, music, etc.

Further information on what we produce, our story and the mission of our Christian apostolate can be found by visiting www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk

First Reading

Acts 6 : 1-7

Today's is a sad commentary on human nature - even in the first Christian community there was racial prejudice. The practical steps taken indicate a community not prepared to "leave it to the Lord" but one which acknowledges and accepts responsibility and seeks to resolve issues. We note they did not only pray about it - they did something about it. If only . . .

"Disciple" is a new name for the followers of Christ who have lately joined the original community. Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews who had come from abroad to live in the Holy Land (rather than Greek-speaking pagan converts) and the Hebrews are from the homeland. It is a sad but human division between those who belonged by birth and those who come to settle. Every age and country knows the tensions. In this case it is injustice towards widows in the daily allowance that has upset the incomers.

The appointment of ordained deacons for simple administration of goods and services is puzzling. The sacramental laying on of hands suggests they had a more important role within the worship of the community and verse 7 suggests the appointments' being a cause of an increase in the community numbers. It is also the only reference we have of converts from the Jewish priesthood.

Questions of Faith

Father and Son. The two men stood before us, one in his late 40's the other in his early 20's. They were clearly father and son, and spoke with affection and good humour about each other. Each was completely himself - in manhood, personality, way of speaking - but the relationship was rich. The father left the room. The son carried on speaking about his wonderful father. A latecomer asked about the father, whom he had not seen, and the son said that anyone who had seen him had "seen" his father . . .

Second Reading

1 Peter 2 : 4-9

Chapter 1 has been full of the wonder of universal salvation, of Jesus' being the fulfilment of the hopes of the Old Testament prophets and of the simple truths of love and sanctity that are the Christian message.

Chapter 2 opens with a plea not to turn away from these simple ideals - and develops into something like a hymn to Christ, the living rock on which to build our lives. Because of him we share a holy priesthood, we are living stones in a temple of glory to God, established on Christ the Rock who is our foundation stone - but also a power to crush the stubborn unbeliever.

The reasoning quickly moves from the negative verses 7-8 to the praise and wonder of verses 9-10. The titles of the Church community are chosen from Old and New Testament, ending with the beautiful title from the prophet Hosea (2:23-24), "People of God". The whole world, besides believers, can share the name.

FRAIL WORLD ~ ETERNAL LIFE

The sadness of prejudice;
The whole world invited;
Jesus is the way.

People of God

Benedict XVI was born in 1927 of a farming family in Southern Germany. He was drafted into anti-aircraft service in the final year of World War II, and at the end of the war began to study for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1951 and went on to further studies, to teaching and writing - a man blessed with a clear mind and great intelligence. In 1973 he became Archbishop of Munich, the first diocesan priest for 80 years to take pastoral care of this large Bavarian diocese. In 1977 he became Cardinal, in 1981 Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, President of the Biblical Commission, of the Pontifical Theological Commission, and in 2003 he became Dean of the College of Cardinals. Pope Benedict XVI knew the horror of war from the age of 12 to 18 and has known the ideals of living for God for the whole of his adult life. May God continue to bless him in his quiet retirement.

Gospel Reading

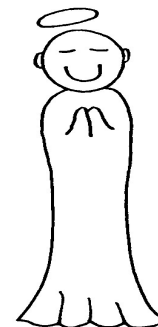
John 14 : 1-12

The Last Supper is over. Judas has gone into the night (13:30) and Jesus tells the disciples he will not be with them much longer. He gives a new commandment (only now, at the very end of his ministry!), Peter speaks the disciples' bewilderment and loyalty, but Jesus gently answers his empty bluster (13:38).

Now begins today's reading. The opening line is powerful. The disciples are aware of betrayal, of Christ's leaving them and his foretelling Peter's weakness and disloyalty. If Peter is weak and disloyal, so could they all be. Jesus wants them not to be troubled by such thoughts but rather to learn a new trust in him and trust in God - which looks to life after death. His leaving them is not to go to the darkness of Sheol but rather to his Father's house where there will be a place for all of them - he is promising eternal life! He is returning to the Father so that they may come to the Father, and he is the way.

Thomas fails to understand so asks a simple question that allows Jesus to make clear they are always to be his followers - they won't find the way alone - and then invites another question by telling them they already know God. Philip is the practical one who draws from Jesus the mysterious answer that Jesus and the Father are one - not the same, but one. Father and Son are divine. It is extraordinary truth or blasphemy: Jesus says he is divine.

Wisdom from the Saints



"Anybody can be Pope. The proof is that I have become one"

Pope John XXIII in letter to a boy who wondered whether to be a Pope or a Policeman.

This week I shall . . .
read about Benedict XVI