



THE LORD'S DAY

2nd Sunday of Lent (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

Genesis 12 : 1-12

The history of the Chosen People begins today. Chapters 1-11 have been a preface, a prologue to the real story. The author has given a glimpse and interpretation of the history of the human race, based upon faith in a unique God (unlike the idols of other peoples and nations), who is saddened by the sins of mankind that have spoiled the goodness and beauty of creation: a God who seeks to restore the original blessings of goodness and life.

God has chosen Abram in Mesopotamia to be father of a new people (as Adam and Noah had been) and calls him to believe in a God he has never heard of and to accept the promise of being father of a great nation. Abram's extraordinary response became for St. Paul a supreme sign of faith, and throughout the Old Testament that faith is praised.

Abram was rich (13:2) but he and Sarah were childless. That he believed in the Lord, by leaving his own people and believing he would be blessed with children, is remarkable. At the time of his call Abram was seventy-five. He was a hundred (and Sarah ninety) when Isaac born, but he lived a further seventy-five years to see the divine promise unfolding. We are at the beginning of a remarkable story.

TRANSFIGURATION

Abram becomes Abraham;
Timothy is called to courage;
Jesus as he truly is.

This week I shall . . .
attend Stations of the Cross

Second Reading

2 Timothy 1 : 8-10

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus are known as the "Pastoral Epistles" - Paul's guiding the young bishops in their duties. But it is unlikely Paul wrote these letters. They appear to be later than his lifetime and to have been written under his name to give them greater authority. The Church accepts them as authentic documents of apostolic times and therefore of "revelation" to the first Church community; but we need to read the teaching and advice more widely than as personal and friendly guidance.

Some scholars prefer to see the letters as Paul to his friends, which is the easier way to read them. Then they become encouraging and reassuring messages of hope and faith, of friendship and family, reaching back over the years.

In verse 5 Paul refers to Timothy's grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice) and reminds the young man how his boyhood faith was nourished in family love. Paul urges the new bishop to be bold in the Spirit, to witness with courage to the holiness of life all Christians must live.

Wisdom from the Saints



"So Abram went as God had told him"

Genesis 12:4

People of God

St Leonard of Port Maurice is best known for promoting devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart, to the Immaculate Conception - and making popular the Stations of the Cross, throughout Italy. He joined the Franciscans of the Strict Observance in 1697, and after being ordained in 1703 was sent to preach in the region of Tuscany. He became a popular preacher throughout Italy, above all in Rome where he attracted huge crowds to pray the Stations of the Cross. It is said that he erected almost six hundred Stations of the Cross in the country. He died in the Friary of St. Bonaventure on the Palatine Hill in Rome in 1751 - just across the road from the Colosseum where the Pope celebrates the Stations every Good Friday. As we share the Stations as a Lenten prayer in our many parishes we are grateful to good men like St. Leonard who made the devotion popular.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 17 : 1-9

In chapter 16 Jesus has faced challenges from the religious authorities, has chosen Peter to be the leader of the apostles and made clear to the disciples that he is to suffer and die. Peter is startled, pleads for it to be untrue, but Jesus' reply is to speak of the cross every disciple must carry.

Six days later comes the Transfiguration, today's reading. Luke says it was eight days later - yet he leads up to the story with similar passages to Matthew's . . . For Luke it is a Lord's day vision, but for Matthew a vision before the Sabbath - for Luke a fulfilment, for Matthew an awaiting.

The setting recalls Moses and Elijah on the Holy Mountain (Horeb/Sinai). Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus - the apostles witness and understand Jesus is fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. They are overcome. Jesus reassures them.

Luke says the apostles were heavy with sleep, suggesting mid-day heat or late evening tiredness. Matthew and Mark say nothing about that. Luke says that they chose to be silent about the vision, but Matthew and Mark say that Jesus asked them to tell no-one.

Questions of Faith

Names. The name "Abram" means "honoured father" whilst "Abraham" means "father of a multitude". We see the significance of God's changing Abram's name - just as we understand why Abram's grandson, Jacob, became "Israel" - a name that means "wrestling with God". God gave Jacob this new name after a dream that the patriarch had. Names are important in every culture, and a change of name will always have a meaning. The wife takes the name of her husband, a nun or monk will take the name of a favourite saint, someone being confirmed will choose a new personal name. In the Gospel, Simon becomes "Peter", Levi becomes "Matthew" and, later, Saul becomes "Paul". We wonder what God's name for us is . . .