



THE LORD'S DAY

The Feast of All Saints

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

Revelation (Apocalypse) 7:2-4, 9-14

The style of writing that we call "apocalyptic" was common in the ancient Middle East for several centuries. We are aware of it in the Bible for two centuries BC and in the first century AD. It is a richly symbolic style - vivid images of disasters and dramatic events, full of colour and movement and significant "numbers".

Today's reading begins with an image of the end of the world. Angels are holding back the winds that will destroy the world, waiting until God's chosen ones are saved. The number is perfect - the sacred number twelve is squared and then multiplied by a thousand. Each of the tribes of Israel is sealed with God's name - the New Israel, Christianity, brought to salvation.

The second vision is of heaven and the countless numbers who have come to the joy of eternal life - those who have been faithful to God in spite of persecutions and the difficulties of life - the martyrs and those who believe in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S WAY v WORLD'S WAY

Revelation offers vivid images,
The Beatitudes make simple contrasts
~ but the truth is the same:
God's way is the one to follow.

*This week I shall . . .
pray for those caught up
in natural disasters.*

Second Reading

1 John 3: 1-3

John's letter is more a homily or address, lacking the formal structure of a letter. He is concerned about the effect of heretical teaching on the Christian community and recalls the listeners to their former awareness of God's blessings.

The style is similar to that of John's Gospel and to the other two letters that bear his name. There are themes of light and darkness, truth and deceit, commandments and sin, the Father and the world. These themes are part of the patterns of thought in the Gospel and the Letters.

Today, John urges faithfulness to God and being on guard against the anti-Christos who are seeking to destroy the community. Some Christians have proved unfaithful and have drawn others away, but recognising the Fatherhood of God and the wonder of being God's children will keep us faithful.

Wisdom from the Saints



"All that I ask of you is that you
remember me at the Altar of God"

St. Monica

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5 : 1-12

This reading is the opening of what we call the Sermon on the Mount. The evangelist presents a number of Jesus' teachings as being drawn together and taught at one time on a quiet hillside.

Matthew's Gospel has a structure of five sections of narrative and teachings, a preface of the Infancy stories and is completed by Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection. Today's reading is the first collection of teachings and follows the beginnings of Jesus' ministry and activity.

Jesus has called the first disciples and they have begun their missions in Galilee. His fame has spread and people come from more distant parts to hear him. He proclaims the Kingdom of God and cures many sicknesses.

Notice that Jesus goes up the hill to get away from the crowds, to speak quietly to the disciples, teaching and forming them. The Beatitudes are rules for a good life, and present vivid contrast between what the world expects and what God wants of us.

Questions of Faith

The Book of Revelation was written by John, a Jewish Christian who thought in Aramaic and wrote in Greek. This suggests St. John the Apostle, but we cannot be certain.

Apocalyptic writings have their roots in Old Testament prophecy and are much influenced by the writings of the ancient Middle East. They are written in times of distress and look forward to the salvation that will reward those who stay faithful. For the Jews, the times of distress were the Assyrian, Babylonian and Greek conquests and the near destruction of their land and religion: for the Christians it was the power of pagan Rome and the cruel persecutions of the Roman Emperors that threatened to destroy their faith. John urges steadfastness: God will triumph, the Roman world will be destroyed.

People of God

The Holy Souls. November is a traditional time of prayer in the Catholic Church for those who have died. Other Christian Churches seem puzzled by this prayer, seeing no need - our loved ones are with God, awaiting the Resurrection. How do Catholics explain their prayer?

"Purgatory" is the first answer - an understanding that few people die ready or worthy enough to immediately be with God. They need to be purified of their sinfulness. This purification was imagined as being in a place apart from God - we are not yet worthy to be in God's presence. We on earth pray for our departed loved ones, making up for their failures, forgiving them their sins and failings - in union with God's forgiving love.

Do we need to think of Purgatory as a place? No. There is no such reference in the Scriptures - though there is mention of prayer for the dead. "Purification" might be a better word to use, and the image is of our coming before a loving God, longing to accept the fullness of God's love but aware of being unworthy.

God's purifying love forgives and heals, and prayer (our human love) unites with God's love - telling the Holy Souls that we love them and long for them to receive and accept the fullness of God's love. Pope Benedict spoke like this of Purgatory in his book, "Jesus Christ".