



THE LORD'S DAY

3rd Sunday of 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

Isaiah 8 : 23 - 9 : 3

At the beginning of chapter 8 a son is born to Isaiah and his wife (called "the prophetess"). The birth is made a sign of disaster to come to Syria and Israel. The prophet contrasts the water of Shiloah, the spring water that nourishes Jerusalem, with the power of the River Euphrates - symbolising the power of the Assyrians. Refusing the fresh spring water of God's city becomes a symbol of Israel's rejecting the Lord.

Verses 8-20 are a warning to Isaiah himself not to be unfaithful as the people are who will suffer darkness (vv.21-23).

Then comes today's reading. In the darkness there is new hope. There will be a restoration of Israel led from the north, from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, the land of Galilee. The Messiah will bring light to the darkness of Israel and will be a hero, like one of those in the Book of Judges, to rescue Israel - just as Gideon did against the Midianites (Judges 7:15-25).

Read on to verses 4-7 "A child is born for us, a son is given to us." It is the promise of the Messiah.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1 : 10-13, 17

The pleasant greetings of verses 1-9 are over, the compliments paid, and now Paul becomes serious. The tentmaker and preacher, who had lived with them for eighteen months, has heard of factions and divisions and scandals within the community, and he speaks strongly.

The Corinthians have been choosing *singers rather than the song* - the disciples rather than the Lord. He, Paul, does not want followers, nor do Apollos or Peter. The people are all to follow Christ, not to see him as one in a number of choices.

The reference to Cephas (Peter) is puzzling. Does it mean that Peter preached in Corinth? Or converts of his had come to live in Corinth and considered themselves superior? Or even that Peter's authority was seen as greater than that of the local church and his followers ignored local rule and community?

We recognise these Corinthian faults - pastor played against pastor, bishop's authority bypassed in favour of papal authority - past or present. In a human Church there are favourites: but Paul reminds the Corinthians that we have a divine founder - Christ: all authority is his.

We have reached verse 17 in chapter 1 of this letter and already Christ's name has been mentioned ten times! Union in Christ is Paul's strong message.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4 : 12-23

This is a fast moving passage: Matthew's story of the temptations in the desert (4:1-11) moves to Jesus ready to begin his ministry, returning from his baptism and the desert wilderness to his home in Galilee. The prophecy of Isaiah in today's first reading is about to be fulfilled: a man from Galilee will bring light to Israel.

Jesus moves north from Nazareth (in Zebulun) to settle at Capernaum on the border with Naphtali, and begins his preaching alone. He befriends four fishermen and asks them to follow him. We do not know where he met them - Capernaum or Bethsaida (see John 1:43) where the apostle Philip also came from.

We later realise that John and James are Jesus' cousins and Zebedee his uncle, because Salome (the wife and mother) was Mary's sister (John 19:25).

This Gospel story is thus dramatised, as a film or play would do it: they left their nets to follow Jesus. But they had known him for a while and knew the call would come. Luke and John tell the stories of the call of the first apostles very differently (Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-42) but the essential truth is the same: they give up their way of life to follow Jesus.

Relations and friends are the best people to take with you on a venture. Jesus' disciples were family and friends.

Wisdom from the Saints



"I would be very happy if I could become a saint soon, and a big one"

St. Joseph Cafasso

WHO IS JESUS?

A man from Galilee;
The Lord for Corinth;
A relative and friend.

*This week I shall bring
family and friends to my prayer*

Questions of Faith

The Chair of Peter. Inside the great bronze chair at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's, Rome, is a small wooden chair said to have been used by St. Peter during his time in Rome. It is fanciful but possible, but the real symbolism is the acknowledgement of St. Peter as the visible head of the Church on earth - ruling from the centre and holding the union of all local churches. We glimpse through the troubles in Corinth the danger of the Church's dividing and the blessing of a central authority - which Jesus gave in St. Peter.

People of God

St. Thomas Aquinas is one of the great scholars of the Church. We celebrate his feast day on 28th January. He was born about 1225 and in his late teens decided to become a Dominican. His family fiercely opposed his vocation, holding him under house arrest for nearly two years to break his spirit - even trying to have women seduce him. They failed. He rejoined the Dominicans, was a brilliant student under St. Albert the Great and became a teacher. He died at the age of 49 on his way to the Council of Lyons. Thomas was a humble, learned and chaste man. He is called the "Angelic Doctor" on account of his chastity and learning. He said that he had learned more from prayer than from study.