



THE LORD'S DAY

11th 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

Exodus 19 : 2-6

It has been a busy three months since the people of Israel left Egypt. The Pharaoh's army pursues to recapture them, they cross the Sea of Reeds under divine protection, and then settle into their pattern of travel and grumble - hungry, thirsty and bored. God has given them water of varying quality, manna and quails as food, helped them defeat the Amalekites in battle, and arranged a meeting for Moses with his father-in-law Jethro and Moses' wife, Zipporah, and their two sons - whom he seems to have deserted. The two men are glad to be together and the father-in-law gives the younger man some wise advice (chapter 18). We wonder God had not given Moses such sensible advice and recognise how the Bible narrative blends history, folklore and myth.

Chapter 19 opens with the arrival at Mount Sinai after three months travel. This is the area where Moses was shepherding when the Angel of Lord spoke to Moses from the burning bush and asked him to return to Egypt and rescue his people whose suffering God had seen.

Today's reading is a wonderful promise to make a slave people the people of God - a promise which echoes down the centuries whenever rulers and Church have responded to the cry of the poor.

GOD'S LAW IS LOVE

Grumbling slaves become God's people;
Christ transforms us into Christians;
Jesus speaks love not law.

*This week I shall . . .
try to make pain prayer*

Second Reading

Romans 5 : 6-11

Paul has been establishing his argument that faith in God through Jesus Christ is the supreme call in human life. Pagans and Jews must leave old ways and follow the Way. Abraham, in chapter 4, has been given as the example of scriptural faith - father of the nations he is called (Rom.4:18) and now Paul develops his theme that faith leads to salvation. Through Jesus we may be at peace with God, through him we live a life of grace (5:1-2). Then, suddenly, in verse 3, Paul introduces the idea of suffering borne for love of God: we persevere in hope and that hope allows us to bear the suffering.

Now that suffering is Paul's theme he has to turn to Christ to explore the meaning of his suffering. That is today's reading. Jesus has taught us how to die - for God and for one another in love.

Paul sees a world, even all creation, transformed by the suffering Christ. By dying for us Jesus made us one with himself and therefore loved by God as he is. When Jesus died for us he made us loveable to God because he is. What an argument! Without Christ God would not love us? Only through Christ is God able to love us? What is Paul teaching? It is an extraordinary faith in and through Christ.

Wisdom from the Saints



"Preaching should break a hard heart and heal a broken heart."

John Newton
(Evangelical)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 9 :36 ~ 10 : 1-8

Chapter 9 is rich in healing miracles - the paralytic, the call of Matthew, the woman with a haemorrhage, the blind man, the dumb demoniac - the people are overwhelmed and Jesus' love for them is the beginning of today's reading. The people have seen in Jesus a love that official religion does not give: in his teaching he gives God as his Father, a God of truth and mercy: official religion gives rules and regulations that without the warmth of love are heavy burdens.

Jesus seems to cry out that the people need love, sympathy and healing: they have seen his miracles and the new life he brings. Jesus wants helpers to bring that new life where he himself cannot go.

We sense the longing for someone to care, to bring them out of their hurt lives to the healing of love. The Church's mission is not to proselytise, make new members, but to gather people to a loving God. This sympathy seems to inspire Jesus to make a new choice - a group of apostles from the larger band of disciples, and they are given the immediate task of healing and purifying lives touched with evil. They are not asked to preach and teach, but to heal. The priest is a healer rather than a preacher . . .

Questions of Faith

Christ's Suffering The early Fathers of the Church explored the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death. That he must die, because he was human and life is limited, they understood: but that he suffered brought a variety of explanations.

- (1) God's justice required not simply forgiveness but compensation, and only God-made-man (Jesus) could make full compensation;
- (2) Jesus suffered to show his love - simply dying would only complete his life;
- (3) the human race were prisoners of sin and only a divine redeemer could set them free;
- (4) divine anger at sin required a divine sacrifice.

If the answer is God's love . . .

People of God

Father Cecil was a renowned preacher, famous for hell-fire and damnation sermons. It seemed people enjoyed being thrilled with spiritual fear! He was pleased to receive many invitations for parish missions and felt grateful for being able to do good, guiding people along the right path of life. The change was sudden: he knew he had been giving the wrong message, effective as it might have seemed - he had preached fear, not love. In an understanding of God's love that he had not previously experienced he prayed and changed. God's love was the only message he now would preach. He was as popular as before, but loved rather than admired. He came close to the Jesus of today's Gospel: love, not sin.