



THE LORD'S DAY

3rd Sunday of Year B

The Watermead Apostolate offers this weekly newsletter as a helpful guide and background to the readings used at our Catholic Mass each Sunday. Watermead began in 1992 as a voice for people who wish to share understanding of living their faith through their various God-given gifts and talents. We frame these gifts by publishing them as books, cards and resources - and we record and publish the music. We also arrange retreats and pilgrimages.

For information about the work of our apostolate, to download our resources or to offer newsletter contributions, do feel welcome to contact us at:

Watermead Apostolate, The Watermead Centre, c/o St. Joseph's, 12 Goodwood Road, Leicester LE5 6SG : Telephone 0044 (0)116 220 7881 / 7880

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First Reading

Jonah 3 : 1-5, 10

Read all this delightful book today. It will take you about fifteen minutes, and you will chuckle your way through it and be caught by the simplicity of the story and its depth of thinking.

Jonah is an unpleasant prophet who does not want to share the God of Israel with other nations. He refuses to go to Nineveh to preach but sets sail in order to avoid God. When a storm blows up he admits to the bewildered sailors that he is at fault and suggests that they throw him overboard.

Jonah is swallowed by a sea-beast and sings psalms on the strange journey back to the Holy Land (the best singers are found in whales) and God tells him again to go to Nineveh. It is a great city, the book says, taking three days to cross, and on the third day salvation comes to the people.

The lesson is wonderful: God loves the whole human race.

TAKING GOD'S WORD TO OTHERS

Jonah typifies an Old Testament attitude that wanted to claim God for Israel alone. He was wrong. The Church has needed reminding of that same truth at various times:
God has no favourites -
everyone is God's child.
Our mission is to share God's love.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 7 : 29-31

It seems probable that St. Paul, as a law-abiding rabbi, was once married and, as a Pharisee, he would have married a woman from a family of similar status. When he became a Christian her family would not have been able to accept his conversion and would possibly have persuaded the wife to leave him.

St. Paul writes elsewhere of marriage that may be dissolved when the couple cannot live at peace, following the conversion to Christianity of one of them, and it seems probable he wrote this from personal experience. (When the Church dissolves a marriage on these grounds it is called the "Pauline Privilege").

In today's reading Paul seems to consider marriage and family a distraction from attending to God and preparing for eternal life.

Read the full chapter seven for yourself.

Wisdom from the Saints



*"Come, follow me,
and I'll make you fishers of people"*

Gospel Reading

Mark 1 : 14-20

Today's reading is a powerful dramatisation of the truth that four fishermen were Jesus' first disciples - but it is not how it really happened.

John and Luke tell very different stories of how the first four apostles were called - John of how he and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist before becoming followers of Jesus, and Luke's speaking of a miraculous catch of fish being a overwhelming sign for Peter. Today's story from Mark (very similar in Matthew) is the simple truth that four fishermen gave up their full-time work to follow Jesus.

They knew him well: James and John were his first cousins, their mother Salome being the sister of Mary, and Peter and Andrew were friends and work colleagues of theirs.

Questions of Faith

Predestination

Predestination was an upsetting teaching in the early centuries of the Church which suggested that God created many human beings with no hope of sharing eternal life.

To be a member of the Christian Church was to be guaranteed a place in heaven, unless by an evil life that grace was lost: but to be outside the Church meant having no chance of eternal salvation.

"Extra ecclesiam salus nulla" is the statement that occurs at various times in the writings of saints and scholars of the Church. Its interpretation has differed at various times but its essential teaching was still clear ~ the exclusion of people from God's eternal love. Today, we do not say it.

People of God

Dominic was adopted when he was eight weeks old. He was a beautiful baby, but over the following months his adoptive parents became puzzled and disturbed that things were not right. He was taken to specialists and they had to come to accept that he was severely handicapped. Their love for him had to change in its understanding and it has grown over the years.

Today he is thirty-eight years old, epileptic, not easily able to move and registered blind - as limited a life as we would find, and he has always been like this. The one light in his life is a love of, and deep appreciation of, music. He plays the piano a little with one hand, also the guitar, but his great joy is listening to music.

When I came to know the family I was overwhelmed by the love that I saw in the parents for each other and for Dominic. It was as happy a home as I have ever visited. I came to know the faith that had helped them over the years and given them the courage and strength to make home for one of God's little ones.

When he made his first Confession the priest came out of his side of the box to help the handicapped boy to come out of his side. He told the mother that Dominic was closer to God than he could ever hope to be. It had been a privilege to hear his Confession and his love. She treasures that memory. Her son is a saint, she knows.

This week I shall . . .

*ponder God's love
for the whole world.*