



THE LORD'S DAY

12th 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

Jeremiah 20 : 10-13

Jeremiah was born about 645 BC. He was called by God as a prophet at about the age of twenty - a rather timid and gentle man. He suffered rejection and mockery, was ignored by the people and had little appreciation from religious or political leaders. A number of times in his writings we share his sense of failure and rejection, of having failed to carry God's message.

Chapter 20 opens with Jeremiah in the stocks, a butt for the people and after a beating from the Temple police. Jeremiah tells the priest, Pashaur, how God will punish the priests and their leaders for their unfaithfulness, but he is treated dismissively.

In verse 10 Jeremiah turns to the Lord, crying out that he has been tricked into being a prophet, and advantage taken of his longing to serve out of his genuine love for people. In return, he feels, God has not protected him from mockery as he tried to give the people the divine message. "Violence and destruction" had been his warning message, but it brought him insult and derision. He is a laughing stock.

Yet he must continue to speak God's word - it is a fire within him (he has had his own Pentecost) and he cannot prevent himself speaking for the God he truly loves.

Now comes today's reading. Jeremiah is afraid, knows people want him to fail, to be humiliated. He consoles himself that the Lord is with him and sings praise . . .

Second Reading

Romans 5 : 12-15

Paul has been speaking of faith that brings us to God. Observance of the Old Testament Law was good, but now that Christ has been given to the world we must acknowledge that he is God's way of calling the whole human race to faith and salvation.

Jesus reconciles us to God by his own suffering love. The Father loves the Son and through him and in him makes us all loveable. We are one with Christ.

We were (and are) one with Adam (people of soil, "Adamah") the human nature that failed God by falling into sin. We have all sinned. We all share a human nature that is soiled soil; but in Christ we are redeemed to a new eternal life. Adamah ("of soil") is our natural life, "Christ anointed" is our new life.

Look carefully at today's first verse in as many bibles as you can. See how the translator understands. Here is the origin of the doctrine of original sin. The guilt of mankind begins with the first sin but is not the cause of mankind's guilt. Paul is saying that because we all sin we link the sinfulness of our lives to that of the human race - going back to the first sin, the original sin, of the human race. Our personal guilt is what Christ has redeemed us from, the whole human race sharing individually in that redemption.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 10 : 26-33

At the beginning of chapter 10 Jesus chooses his twelve apostles from amongst the disciples and commissions them to go out in his name. He gives advice on apostolate (vv.5-16), warnings against enemies (vv.17-25) and then comes today's reading.

Jesus urges courage and openness. There is no one they need fear, no circumstance in which God will not be watching over them. He implies that he needs them to witness for him - it is a mysterious trust he offers. What God could do in an instant (could God?), Jesus is saying, must be achieved by frail men who will suffer and fail. Sadly, he feels the need to threaten he will disown them if they fail him. The mood of this passage is not easy to judge - courage, encouragement, then threat.

The "threat" carries on in the following verses. The apostles will see homes and families divided because of the apostolic preaching and are warned to place human affection second to duty towards God. They must expect to be judged as belonging to God rather than as individual persons in themselves. They must die to themselves if they want to be true to God. This truth St. Paul came to see reflected in Christian baptism - a dying and rising with Christ.

SELFISH ~ SELFLESS
Jeremiah speaks and suffers for God;
Selfish Adamah becomes Christian;
Disciples speak and suffer for Christ.

*This week I shall . . .
question my Christianity*

Wisdom from the Saints

"There must be a willingness to probe questions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discern new understanding"

Betty Govinden

Questions of Faith

Original Sins "If Adam and Eve is a myth (religious story revealing truth) how are we guilty of something done in a story?" And evolution suggests that the mutation of the lower species into the human race (by God's grace) would have involved a number of people, not one couple. Science and faith clash?

Are there two original sins: the one in my own life and the first time wrong was done in God's good creation? St. Paul says that our sinfulness links us to the guilt of sin going back to the first sin: but he is not necessarily saying that we share the guilt of that first sin. The translation of Romans 5:12 is disputed and needs much careful thought.

People of God

Saints Alban, Julius and Aaron are martyrs that we remember on 20th June. Alban is recognised as the earliest British martyr, sacrificing his life to save a priest from capture, says his legend, whilst Julius and Aaron were Roman soldiers who served at the great fort of Caerleon. All three died, we believe, in the persecution of Diocletian at the end of the third century, and are witnesses to the British Catholic faith of the early centuries. The Church in Britain has two histories - the British Celtic and the Anglo-Saxon. We should know both.