



THE LORD'S DAY

28th 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 25 : 6-10

This beautiful reading is one often suggested for funerals. In the setting of the Requiem Mass and celebration of the Eucharist, the prophet's vision of a heavenly banquet to which all peoples are invited is poignant and inspiring. The Lord in his Temple on Mount Sinai in Jerusalem awaits the peoples of the world. A banquet is prepared. The mists of sadness and the darkness of a world that knew death fade away. Life is here. The Lord wipes away tears from eyes, pardons guilt and shame, and we share the vision of God.

The chapter has opened with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Isaiah has understood something of God's plans for human history, and for Israel within that history. The poor and needy have found a protector and the prophet sees through the veil of death. Salvation is for those who love the Lord, in this life or after death. There is only one salvation, some knowing it now and all others will come to know. The joy of God's saving love (v.9) leads into chapter 26, to a song of confidence and trust, to a psalm which rejoices for the upright who live now in blessing and peace.

GOD'S HEAVEN

Heavenly banquet for all;
Communion of saints;
All are invited.

*This week I shall pray ...
for my atheists and agnostics*

Second Reading

Philippians 4 : 12-14, 19-20

The Philippians have been financially generous towards Paul. He is grateful - but more grateful for their love and concern. He tells them he has learned how to economise, to manage his resources - because God is with him. Interestingly, he does not claim that God has provided or will provide: he sees such provision as part of the love in the communion of saints; but he trusts that in all circumstances God will give him strength.

In verses 15-18 Paul reminds the people of details of their generosity, of his gratitude and his prayer that God will provide for them in all their needs. The thought of such blessings lead Paul to another prayer before his warm farewell (vv.21-23).

Note that some important imperial officials are with Paul: they add their greetings to Paul's. This suggests that Paul has won converts even in prison!

Wisdom from the Saints



Gospel Reading

Matthew 22 : 1-14

Matthew and Luke tell this parable. It is worth comparing the difference - such as Luke has a man giving a banquet, but Matthew has a king giving a wedding feast for his son. In Matthew the guests are not only discourteous but foolishly violent: they kill the king's servants - a pointless action. The king's anger is aroused and he punishes the invited guests and burns their town. This is the Jerusalem destroyed in AD72 by Titus and his Roman army. Jesus' parable has become an allegory with the passing of time, and real historic detail overlays its story aspect.

Luke's story seems closer to a teaching parable: the discourtesy of the invited guests cause the man's rage but no revenge.

Both stories have the banquet places filled by anyone who is willing, or can be coaxed, to come - and the feast is full. Then comes Matthew's strange ending with a guest being excluded because he has no wedding garment. The simple explanation is that Matthew has joined together two parables, the second smaller one about someone coming to a feast without due preparation.

The teaching of both parables is the same: Israel were the first invited but have refused God's son; so the invitation has become one given to the whole world.

Questions of Faith

Eternal Life. The New Testament, Gospels and Letters of the Apostles, makes clear that the Christian message is for the whole world: *all* are called to be saved. The Old Testament glimpsed that wonder of God's universal love (especially the final part of the Book of Isaiah): the New Testament is full of that vision. But how can the world know unless they are told? There will be mission and messengers - but still not everyone will hear. Those who do not hear in life will hear in dying, completing their lives. The Father's love, the Saviour's redemption, are divine gifts for every child of God.

People of God

Native Peoples. When new worlds were discovered the Church had to ask if these peoples were included in God's plan of salvation. Early centuries had seen a struggle for the mind of the Church about predestination: the awful possibility that many of God's children were born without hope of eternal life. Writers argued that the Christian message had been heard everywhere and those who ignored it were outside the Church's call to salvation; but now, in the discovery of new peoples, salvation needed to be understood in another way. Baptism - by water, blood, desire - had never been theirs; and one dreadful consequence was the enslaving of the native peoples because they were considered to be not fully human. There was struggle between missionary orders, who saw God's love reflected in the native peoples, and traders and conquerors who saw *beasts of burden* whom they could enslave. The vision of the mission orders eventually won the mind of the Church, the salvation of the world being seen as the Father's love and Christ's redemption - two gifts for every human person: from womb to death we live within the divine love. The blessing of faith is to know that truth now, and the mission of the Church is to proclaim the message so all may know God's love.