

THE LORD'S DAY

30th 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 22 : 20-26

In chapter 22 God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. the Decalogue, (vv.1-17) and the people are overawed by the signs of the presence of God (vv.18-21). They plead with Moses to speak and listen to the Lord on their behalf - they need to keep their distance. Moses returns to the cloud of darkness - to the presence of God.

The Book of the Covenant begins (v.22) and deals with developments of the original commandments - sacrifices, duties towards slaves, disputes and killings, stealing and compensation; then comes today's reading.

The passage shows a warm humanitarian attitude towards strangers, foreigners, widows and orphans, reflecting a God who regards all people with love. Israel are the Chosen People but must be open and welcoming to other peoples. They had known oppression and slavery in Egypt and the Lord had been with them: they must remember that divine protection, love and share it with the peoples that settle with them.

The Lord's love for the poor is beyond law. The Covenant has been dealing with justice, but today's gentle reading speaks of God's "anawim" (the little ones) as being of every nation: God's love for the world.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 1 : 5-10

The pleasant greeting is over - from Paul, Timothy and Silvanus. Reassurance of union of prayer has been given (vv.2-3) and God-shared love rejoiced in, as given through the Good News of Christ (vv.4-5).

Now Paul offers something personal. He had given them a good example: as he followed Christ so had he urged them to follow him, imitating his example and thus the Lord. It is a powerful claim: Paul is saying he is so much one with Jesus that in following Paul the Thessalonians can be assured of following Christ.

It is a wonderful argument. Paul embodies Christ. By imitating him they will also embody Christ. Each Christian is a sacrament of Christ (outward sign of inner life) and a part of the Mystical Body of Christ - indeed, can even be Christ's mystical body. We are living temples through being God's dwelling places and living stones making up the Temple of the New Covenant, the dwelling place of God upon earth, the Church.

Thus the Thessalonians are examples and inspiration to others, and the news of this has come back to Paul. It is the greatest of Christian messages: the Christian embodies Christ, is another Christ. Inspiration and example follow: it is the Good News given by personal living. There is no better way.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 22 : 34-40

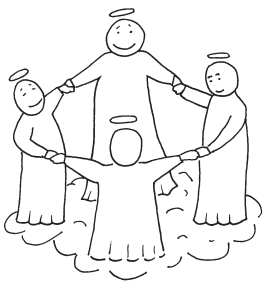
Jesus is challenged four times in chapter 22: by the Pharisees on paying tribute to Caesar, by the Sadducees on resurrection of the dead, on the essentials of the Law (today's reading) and on the human nature of the Messiah, the Christ.

Today's story in Matthew is based on antagonism - his enemies want to outwit him; but Mark's Gospel (12:34) tells of an individual lawyer who has listened to Jesus' speaking and genuinely asks the important question. Jesus' manner of answering pleases the lawyer (was it a "personal" rather than a "correct" answer he was seeking?) and Jesus returns the compliment - a pleasant exchange.

Luke's Gospel (10:25-28) also has an individual lawyer ask the question, but his motivation is not pleasant. In Luke's story Jesus turns the question back on the lawyer and asks for his answer! It is given, but the man wants to continue his challenge which leads to Jesus' telling the tale of the Good Samaritan. Matthew and Mark do not have the parable. How would Luke know this parable that they didn't know?

Nowhere in the Old Testament are the two commandments of love (for God and neighbour) given together. We find them in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 and wonder that no Old Testament author made a positive linking of the two. That it was official teaching in Jesus' time is clear (the lawyers are involved) but how far the ordinary people would have been able to answer the question we cannot judge.

Wisdom from the Saints



"The greater our union with our neighbour, the greater our union with God"

Dorotheus of Gaza

LOVE SUPREME

God's love for everyone;
A true Christian reflects God's love;
Love God and neighbour.

This week I shall ... *thank God for others' loving me.*

People of God

Adam was a live-wire little boy, full of fun in a happy home. When he started school his parents hoped he would take the joy of home to school, just as his elder brother had (and his younger brother and sister later would). He did, fitting in perfectly to school activities. He was friendly with everyone. One day he was cooking (at four-and-a-half!) and talking about his family and friends and school. Doreen, the cookery teacher, commented "You seem to like everyone." Adam opened his arms wide and said "I love the whole world." We guess Adam would become more selective as the years went by - but he had already touched the Christian ideal: to love as God loves, to love the whole world. Moses and Paul remind us in today's readings of that ideal, and Jesus expresses it simply in the Gospel.

Questions of Faith

Loving and Liking. We love others when we want them to be happy. We do not need to like them, or be part of their happiness in friendship, but we would do nothing to spoil their happiness. God's love for others we may not understand because we do not like them (prejudice - racial and religious, especially), but we accept that God loves everyone. We can love, also, by acknowledging and sharing God's love for them.