

THE LORD'S DAY

32nd 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

Wisdom 6 : 12-16

The Book of Wisdom is the final book of the Wisdom collection in the Old Testament, written about 50 BC and in a style different from the others.

Gone are the sharp pithy sayings, arrows of good sense that draw immediate appreciation, for the style of the Book of Wisdom is more like a series of essays or talks - an exploration of important themes in human living and of faith in God.

The book seems to have been written in Alexandria (Egypt), the great centre of Jewish learning in the Ancient Greek world, and is addressed to the Jewish people (chapters 1-5), to the Gentiles (6-9) who are urged to see Wisdom as the unifying principle of the cosmos, and then offers a survey of God's guiding love throughout the history of Israel (chapters 10-19).

Chapter 6 opens the section on praise of wisdom. It moves from advising kings to motivate virtue, encouraging everyone to do the same (today's reading), on to Solomon and the wonderful words that take us through chapters 7, 8 and 9. To read these chapters is to appreciate the gifts with which the Lord blesses us and the value of developing such gifts.

Wisdom is portrayed as a lady in today's reading, implying in how gentle a manner she is to be appreciated. She is everywhere and wishes to be so. She is a wonderful companion - and in chapter 9 we learn she was God's companion at the creation.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 4 : 13-18

The excitement in today's reading is intense. Death and salvation have become for Paul a fulfilment of eternal life. Earlier in the chapter he has been urging holiness and mutual love as the great calls of the Christian life, speaking as though God were a friend who wanted him to pass on this advice. God and Paul are friends . . .

Paul speaks of a further aspect of the community of saints - those who have died. Sorrow is understandable, he says, but grief is not to be hopeless and pagan-like. Sorrow in faith looks forward to reunion with our loved ones. Christian hope is founded on this faith in the resurrection: *Jesus died and rose again and so shall we.* (Paul says elsewhere that Jesus "was raised", rather than "rose": we can ask shall we rise or be raised?)

Paul assures us that those alive at the end of the world will witness the resurrection of the dead, and that we shall be taken up with them to stay with the Lord for ever. It is a glorious vision that Paul offers.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25 : 1-13

Only Matthew tells this parable (though Luke 12:35-38 gives the same teaching). It follows on from the parable of the good steward who faithfully looks after the master's affairs during his absence, in contrast to the servant who takes advantage of the master's absence and too late realises the return is upon him.

The bridesmaids show a similar contrast. All are invited to the wedding, just as both the servants were trusted. Bridesmaids are invited to provide ceremony with lighted lamps for the wedding processions and reception. They are not there for themselves but to give honour to the bridegroom and bride.

The shortage of oil is the responsibility of the foolish bridesmaids. They must atone by going to buy oil for themselves, but fear being late back - so they ask for a share of the wise virgins' oil instead. Justifiably, the request is refused. It is common sense that oil sufficient for five lamps would not be sufficient for ten, and the wedding reception would have been ruined.

Everyday life is full of scroungers preying on the kindness or embarrassment of others. Provide for yourselves responsibly, says the parable. Be wise, not foolish and wasteful. Prepare for the coming of the Lord by always being ready.

EVERYDAY LIVING

Let wisdom be your companion;
Live for eternal life;
Jesus will come. Welcome him.

Wisdom from the Saints



"'Those who die are no longer where they were before: they are now with us wherever we go"

St. John Chrysostom

This week I shall pray ...

every day for my departed loved ones.

Questions of Faith

Praying for the Dead. "Those who die are no further from us than God, and God is very near." These lovely words are from Teilhard de Chardin and speak our Christian faith. Our loved ones are with the Lord. We pray for them and with them, telling them still of our love for them, asking and granting forgiveness and reassurance, as we see the need. The longing for the completeness of God's love which we shall all know when we die is our being purified (purgatory), regretting we did not live more fully for God. What joy in pain of forgiveness that suggests!

People of God

The Lady spoke of her regret that her mother had died and that there had been no reconciliation. For years they had not spoken, mutual stubbornness keeping them apart - and now it was too late. She cried as she spoke of her bitterness at herself. Our faith reassures her that it was not too late: in her prayer she could still ask God and her mother to forgive her. In death, her mother would have come before the Lord and been overwhelmed with the divine love shared by all the children of God. The mother would need to be purified of all her faults and sinfulness by that forgiving love and would long to share that forgiveness with those she had hurt or been hurt by. We recognise that forgiving love is in our everyday family lives and friendships - it is a gift from God, who is love. In death we come see the fullness of God's love and long to share it. We pray for the dead in their longing to be purified and tell them of our love for them. It is the Communion of Saints. In love and prayer we remain very close.