



# THE LORD'S DAY

21st Sunday of Year C

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](http://www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk)

## First Reading

Isaiah 66 : 18-21

We are in the final chapters of the Book of Isaiah. The writer (not Isaiah, long dead now) sees the wonder of the world converted to the Lord. Missionaries who have found such faith return to their own lands, to the whole world, and tell all peoples of the glory of God.

Earlier in the chapter the nations have been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem (vv 10-14) and now they return to their homelands, bringing the message of God's love to the most distant nations - Tarshish (Spain), Put (Somalia), Lud (Libya), Moshech and Tubal (Turkey), Javan (Greece) - (Rosh is unknown). The world as Israel knew it, separated by not knowing God, will be united to Israel as a new pilgrimage to the Temple takes place (v 20).

This third part of the book (chapters 55-56) has many echoes of the prophets' sadness at Judah's unfaithfulness and an awareness of the pain of exile suffered under Assyria (721BC) and Babylon (587 BC). But this is a prayerful awareness of lessons learned during Israel's history - that God is Lord of the whole earth and that one day the nations of world will acknowledge him.

### LIFE'S JOURNEYS

The world on pilgrimage to God;  
God corrects our ways;  
Wise and foolish travel together.

This week I shall . . .

look back at my life's pilgrimage.

## Second Reading

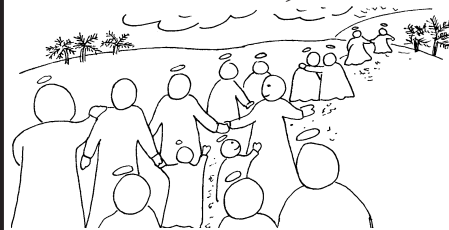
Hebrews 12 : 5-7, 11-13

Chapter 11 has detailed the faith of Old Testament figures - Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Rahab - and mentioned others, such as Samuel and the prophets. In chapter 12 the author writes of Jesus who leads us in faith. He is the final messenger and in him we find courage to face the evils of our world.

Today's reading changes direction. Courage becomes encouragement, love becomes correction - and we are children of God who need correction. The unpleasant verses 8-10 are omitted but the argument remains: you must be prepared to suffer at the hands of God, but to see such suffering as loving correction.

It is an unpleasant reading, though its intention is good: God loves us, wants us to grow in love and faith, but the God reflected is a disciplinarian. This is not the Father spoken so lovingly of by Jesus, but someone pictured by a lesser mind. "God is love" says St. John. It would be hard to summarise Hebrews' vision of God in the same way.

### Wisdom from the Saints



"Onward goes the pilgrim band  
marching to the Promised Land"

Bernhard Ingemann

## Gospel Reading

Luke 13 : 22-30

There are several themes in today's Gospel. The narrow door is for everyone to try, the people have not been true to the faith of the patriarchs and the prophets, the world is now to hear what Israel heard first.

Matthew (7:13-14) speaks of a narrow gate and a hard road, but today's reading imagines a narrow door into a house. (Did Jesus use both images in his teaching?) Luke then develops the image to the Lord inside the house with the door locked. Merely walking the streets of the Holy Land, says Jesus, is no guarantee of entering the house: only those true to faith will find the way, whatever part of the world they come from. The Gentiles, seemingly rejected by God's choice of Israel, will also have their places in Heaven.

Matthew's parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins has a similar conclusion. We recall that these two Gospel accounts were written about 75-85AD and a strong awareness of salvation for the whole world would have taken hold. The apostles had thought that Jesus' message was only for Israel (Acts 10:34-35): now they understand better. God's love is for the whole world.

### Questions of Faith

#### Universal Salvation

We believe in a God of love and in Christ who died for love of the whole world. There is the basis for our belief in universal salvation.

We believe that every child is given life by a loving God in a world redeemed by a loving saviour.

St Paul's letters are full of the wonder of a God who loves, who chose Israel first but whose love, through Jesus, is to be revealed universally. The Church has grown in understanding of that revelation, preaching a baptism by which, even now, we live the life of Christ towards eternity; but knowing that in death everyone comes to the God of love and will know Jesus.

## People of God

**St Monica** was born in the year 332, in Tagaste in North Africa. She grew up in a good Christian home but was unfortunate in the husband chosen for her by her parents. He was a pagan and showed no interest in her Christian faith, although he was baptised a year before his death, to Monica's joy, and died a true believer. Her sadness was still alive for her son, Augustine, who had given up the Faith as young teenager and chosen a life of ambition and learning. Monica's tears pursued him and finally won him back to God. She died in 387, happy that her son had returned to the Church.

**St Augustine** was born in 354, also at Tagaste. We know from his Confessions that he bitterly regretted his sinful youth and early adult years and the hurt he brought to his mother. He was 32 before he finally accepted God, and soon afterwards lost his mother with whom he might have shared so much in the Faith. For the rest of his life Augustine gave himself completely to the service of God and the Church - writing, teaching and living a holy prayerful life. He was a man of extraordinary intelligence and of great moral courage.