



THE LORD'S DAY

22nd 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

First Reading

Ecclesiasticus 3 : 17-20, 28-29

Jesus, the son of Sirach, wrote this book early in the second century BC. It is a book of moral and religious teachings in a variety of styles.

Chapter one has spoken of God's gift of wisdom to humanity, the reverent fear of the Lord this should engender and the life of integrity this would lead to. Chapter two is honest about the trials a good man suffers but encourages belief in a loving God who always watches over his chosen ones.

Chapter three is addressed to children, urging a loving reverence for parents throughout life (vv 1-16), and then comes today's reading. The student is advised to be kind and gentle, to act always with humility because people respond to kindness better than to generosity. Do read vv 21-27 (omitted from the passage) and understand the humility which is based upon human frailty and limitations - and brings an awareness which is protection against pride.

This is a fine chapter, reflecting family life and its generations, guiding the reader to a life of integrity, avoiding pride.

WISDOM FOR DAILY LIVING

Be gentle and kind;
"Fear" is love and reverence:
Be humble, be ever so humble!

This week I shall . . .
be ever so humble . . .

Second Reading

Hebrews 12 : 18-19, 22-24

Chapter twelve has spoken of Christ's faith in his Father and of our accepting God's correction and discipline in our lives. Today's reading offers a choice - between the Old Covenant, made in an awe-inspiring and frightening occasion on Mount Sinai, and the New Covenant which is an invitation to a festival in the heavenly Jerusalem - where God awaits us.

The contrast is dramatic. The God who was a blazing fire, a great voice in a terrifying darkness, has become the God who welcomes us to the heavenly kingdom, though remaining the God who is a consuming fire (v 29) and must be looked at with reverence and fear - not the "fear" of terror but the fear that teaches love.

The Fathers of the Church spoke of instinctive fear which we all know - nothing to learn there except to face or overcome it: the fear of the Lord is the reverence and awe that we feel for someone we greatly love. We express this simply as "I would be afraid to hurt" - inspired by love, not fear.

Wisdom from the Saints



"This is what God
asks of you:
act justly,
love tenderly
and walk humbly
with your God"

Micah 6:8

Gospel Reading

Luke 14 : 1, 7-14

Notice that vv 2-6 are omitted in today's Gospel. Those verses tell of Jesus' healing a man of dropsy and asking the Pharisees and lawyers if it were right to act thus on a Sabbath day. When they do not answer he reminds them of common sense: if their animals fell in a ditch on the Sabbath they would not wait until the morrow - so Jesus will not wait to cure a man's suffering.

Jesus then speaks a strange parable. It reads like a game of social courtesy: plan to be noticed by belittling yourself. Be a Uriah Heep ("I am ever so humble") and you will be rewarded by being noticed, and bask in the admiration of the other guests as you are led to a place of honour?

It seems pointless. Everyone crowds to the lowest place to be brought to the highest place? It couldn't happen. What does Jesus teach here? Look at the Book of Proverbs (25:6-7) and Luke (11:43) and you will find beginnings of an answer. Jesus is targeting the Pharisees whose social nature seems to have been that of claiming the best places. Try the Christian way, suggests the Gospel. Be humble - and if you are left in the lowest place, you'll learn how others see you . . .

Questions of Faith

"What every woman wants in a husband" What a title for a book, but how well the woman wrote from her love for God and the family. The difficulties and joys of married life and home, the tensions that all relationships learn to resolve and to grow from, she looked at honestly.

She considered the qualities that she liked in men and came down to the two she considered every woman wants to see in the men (husband, son, father, brother, friend) that she loves . . . that they be strong and gentle: strong to guard and protect, gentle in love and understanding.

She had come to the Gospel. Jesus was strong and gentle.

People of God

Sarah is suffering from cancer, courageously and patiently. She is lovely to visit because of the welcome she expresses in her pleasant smile and gentle conversation. There is no self-pity, simply an acceptance of her illness and gratitude for the loving help.

Clare is the one who is offering most of that help. Twice a day she is in to make sure Sarah is comfortable, to be company, to bring the shopping - but never staying too long, knowing how tiring conversation can be. Those of us who call recognise the gentle saintliness of the two ladies.

Mike is your gentle and strong family man - husband, father and grandfather. We know their love for him and understand it. We also know some of his colleagues at work and know how much they like and trust him. He lives his love for God in each aspect of his life.

Tom is dead now, but what a family memory he has left. Even as the years pass his memory glows in the loving way the family talk about him. He is one of our saints in heaven, the others are our saints still with us. We all know saints - humble, as the Gospel parable.