



# THE LORD'S DAY

25th 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

Amos 8 : 4-7

This is the first book of the Old Testament Prophets. Amos was a shepherd who felt compelled to speak God's message to Israel - which had reached a prosperity under Jeroboam II that recalled the reign of Solomon. The prophet sees the false security of political influence and wealth, and warns against the luxuries of business and religious life.

Amos reveals a surprising knowledge of world affairs and severely judges the nations for their crimes, in chapters 1 and 2, before focusing on Israel. The severity increases through chapters 3 and 4 before a hymn of distress in chapter 5 and warnings in chapter 6.

Chapters 7 and 8 bring a series of visions - locusts, drought, measuring-line, basket of fruit, famine, darkness. In the midst of these visions comes today's reading. Amos targets the greed and dishonesty of traders and he is ferocious. They have so much, yet they cheat and take advantage of the poor and needy. He scorns those who do not see the Sabbath and the New Moon as times of rest and to honour the Lord - but as their opportunity for planning further profits and swindling. Market traders ("serve from the back") - touching the scales, altering weights - tell us of sharp-eyed Amos who knows the market place.

### A WORLD WITHOUT GOD

Cheating the poor;  
Cruelty and injustice in authority;  
Dishonesty in business.

This week I shall . . .  
follow the business news.

## Second Reading

1 Timothy 2 : 1-8

Paul addresses Timothy as his son (chapter 1:18) - the elder talking to the young man, new to responsibility. The warrior in Paul ("fight the good fight") wants to inspire Timothy to be brave against heretics and blasphemers. Preach forgiveness, he says, but be strong against those who refuse to admit they are wrong and who could do harm.

Today's reading is not easy. It contains no sense of political or social justice. Paul accepts the Roman world as it is: an Emperor-butcher in Nero, subservient and cowardly kings who fail to protect their people. This is our world, he says, and we must pray for all those in authority.

Pray for what, we might ask? Not to convert them but simply for the Christians to be left alone to honour God seems to be Paul's answer. He is looking beyond justice and peace - to eternal life when we have all been saved. Those in cruel or subservient authority are to be saved as well as believers: we must include all in our prayer.

## Gospel Reading

Luke 16 : 1-13

Here is your money market, stock exchange, insider dealings, madness dressed up as good business. There is not a good man amongst them in this parable-vision of men consumed by greed.

A careless steward has been caught by his trusting master and is to be dismissed. We would expect compensation to be made, but the careless steward becomes dishonest. He treats others by lessening their debts and they, too, become dishonest. His intention is to secure a new place for himself, but who would trust a steward who has cheated his former employer?

There is the irony. The debtors will use the dishonest steward but would never employ him. He has been foolish and dishonest and they, in their businesslike way, can use him but not employ him.

Jesus' words (vv 9-13) stress the irony. No-one will trust you if you have become dishonest. They will use you, accept you as a colleague (so long as they suffer no personal loss from the dishonesty) but not pay you to work for them. Dishonesty works amongst equals, but not at different levels. Thus greed and dishonesty cannot build a community which embraces all in love and makes them equal. Desire for money destroys community.

## Wisdom from the Saints



"The Kingdom  
of God  
is the power  
of God  
enthroned  
in our  
hearts"

John Main  
(Benedictine Monk)

## Questions of Faith

### Morality and Legality.

We who believe look to God to guide our consciences in all matters. We look to the Church to help us form our consciences in the light of God's law and love. We talk about moral right and wrong.

But many people are content to live according to the law of the land, to accept what is lawful and unlawful as the guide to their consciences. The tension comes when the law of the land is not according to our understanding of the law of God: we must then choose. History shows many examples of persecution by the State of religious belief and morality.

## People of God

**Archbishop Helder Camara** spoke sadly of his work for the poor he loved in north-eastern Brazil. He said that when he helped feed his people he was called a saint, but when he asked why they were poor he was called a communist and condemned. His brave voice is one of many from the Americas who have spoken out against the injustice that has been a feature of life for the native Indians since the "discovery" of the New World; and similar voices have spoken against the power of Empire in other parts of our world. Too often the Church has been seen as part of the oppression of native peoples or as failing to speak for the oppressed (e.g. slavery). In apologies from hierarchies (e.g. German, Italian, Argentinian, Chilean) we sadly recognise how conscience can be stifled by political power.