



THE LORD'S DAY

27th 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

Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4

Treat yourself to reading the whole of the book of Habakkuk - just a few minutes long. You will find a mind stretched to understand the providence of God in international, national and local affairs, and yet also alive to the goodness and challenge of everyday life (2:4).

Scholars believe Habakkuk was prophesying at the time of Jeremiah, but know nothing about him outside of his book. A prophet of the same name (perhaps "borrowed" from this book?) makes an amusing appearance in the Book of Daniel (14:33-39), but that is a story.

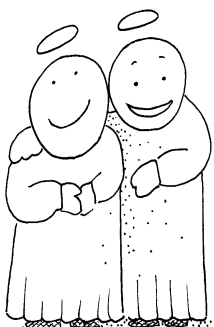
Today's reading sees Habakkuk challenging God. There is great injustice and the Lord seems not to listen to the cries of the oppressed - God is deaf to prayer (1:2). The powerful answer comes (1:5-10) that retribution will come from a cruel nation and Israel be defeated and punished. The conquerors will, in their turn, be punished for killing the innocent along with the guilty.

Habakkuk is bewildered. Here is a God who punishes the "bad" by using the "worse" - who then also must be punished.

The whole of chapter two is a frightening vision of wrath and destruction, controlled or allowed by God. There is no justice here, only power. Habakkuk is in agony as he sees evil dominate the world.

Then, suddenly, there is peace (2:20): Habakkuk is in the Temple with God, a sad but trusting hymn is sung and faith is renewed (vv 18-19).

Wisdom from the Saints



"It is in giving
that
we receive,
and
it is in
pardoning
that we
are pardoned"

© "Little Saints"

St. Francis of Assisi

Second Reading

2 Timothy 1 : 6-8, 13-14

Timothy needs encouragement and today's verses offer advice and example. Paul has addressed Timothy as "a dear child" (v2) and we hear an older man passing on the flame of Church leadership. Paul speaks of Timothy's family (v5) and we sense friendship behind the choice of the young man for this position of authority.

But how to live that authority? Paul tells him (vv 6-8) and then opens out into a preaching style (vv 9-11) that is generalisation rather than personal advice. Today's verses (13-14) bring us to the individual and practical again - to friends who have deserted Paul and to friends who have become even more loyal to him.

It is a lesson for young Timothy: he, too, will face trials and disappointments.

GOD ASKS MUCH

Habakkuk asks for understanding;
Timothy is prepared for trials;
Faith can do the impossible?

Questions of Faith

Forgiveness over Time

Today's Gospel tells us that no one is to be lost, thus that everyone is to be forgiven. If everyone is forgiven, then we all must forgive. But many find it impossible to forgive, even over a very long time.

A Jewish friend told his Christian friend not to tell him to forgive the Holocaust: only those who suffered had the right to judge when and how that forgiveness should be granted.

Deserted spouses and children carry hurt over many years and do not need the pious and comfortable to preach that they should forgive. Forgiveness needs time, can rarely be quick. We seek to forgive in union with God who allows all human life time. To want to want to forgive may be the slow start.

This week I shall pray . . .
for someone I can't yet forgive.

Gospel Reading

Luke 17 : 5-10

The opening verses of chapter 17 are spoken to Jesus' disciples, but how far they became general truth depended upon the apostles. They selected the teachings of Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit, that became the mission of the Church. Some teaching was reserved to those in authority.

Verses 1-3 warn that problems will arise and that wisdom will be required to resolve various situations. No one is to be lost. The responsibility seems to be that of the apostles. Brotherly correction (v 4) seems a Church matter rather than a family affair. To grant forgiveness seven times a day is an extraordinary expectation. In Matthew a more improbable figure is given - of forgiving 490 times! Jesus' meaning is clear - always forgive.

Now comes today's reading, continuing fantastic images. In Matthew 17 (v20) we learn faith can move mountains, and in 21 (v21) we can tell a mountain to throw itself into the sea. In Luke we learn the same faith can uproot a mulberry tree and plant it in the sea! Plant it, not simply throw it! Glorious impossible images.

Then the contrast in today's verses 7-10. The disciples must see themselves as the slaves of God. No master is grateful to his slaves and they must not expect gratitude: this is the ancient world of slaves and masters, but is a cruel image of God. Today's Gospel seems to invite us to have faith in a God who treats us as slaves . . .

People of God

St Faustina. Helena Kowalska was born in Poland, 25th August, 1905, the third of 10 children. She entered the convent of Our Lady of Mercy when she was twenty, choosing the name Faustina when she received her religious habit. A few years later Our Lord revealed to her his divine mercy and asked her to be his apostle to the world: in her daily life she was to bring peace and joy to others. She wrote about the Divine Mercy in secret, and when she died in 1938 even her sisters were startled at her great sufferings and her mystical experiences. Her diary "Divine Mercy in my Soul" has become the handbook for devotion to the Divine Mercy.