



THE LORD'S DAY

29th 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

Exodus 17 : 8-13

It is three months since the people left Egypt on their journey to the Promised Land. Things have gone well, except for occasional grumbling about unclean drinking water and food shortages. When we recall the amazing figure of 600,000 men ("not counting the families") that had left Egypt (Exodus 12:37) we are not surprised about thirst and hunger. Where would food and water be waiting for such millions of people?

Manna is the biblical answer for their food. The people remember being fed in Egypt (16:3) but God promises desert nourishment each day (16: 29-36).

The journey takes the people through the region of the Amalekites, who fear being conquered by a huge invading force. They attack Israel, but Moses can't be ready until the following morning! Joshua seems to be commander in chief (yet, later, in chapter 33, he is Moses' servant and a young man) and he marches out to engage Amalek.

It is a strange battle. Israel simply want to pass through the territory on the way to the Promised Land, yet we read that Joshua cuts down the enemy (v.13) and God will wipe away the memory of Amalek (v.15). Here is a tribal god, not the Father we meet in the Gospel.

GOD LISTENS IN ETERNITY?

Does God listen to everyone?
Trust the word of God;
Never stop asking, praying.

This week I shall . . .
reply immediately

Second Reading

2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:2

Suddenly Paul becomes family and personal. He recalls Timothy's childhood, his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (1:5) and how well the boy had been instructed in the Scriptures. Here is a love for the Old Testament that Paul has brought into the new Christian community and that he wants Timothy to share in his ministry.

See how the Scriptures enrich our faith, he says, - teaching, answering error, daily guidance and instruction in wisdom. Timothy is to learn these lessons for himself and then to teach others from his own personal experience.

The solemn opening of chapter four "Before God and Christ Jesus . . ." leads to another reminder from Paul that Timothy, young as he is, must be steadfast, strong, patient, fearless, a messenger at all times and in all circumstances. People can be negligent, superficial and fickle, but Timothy must win them by his courageous service.

Wisdom from the Saints



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"Those who
pray should
pray
with their hearts
in touch with
their mouths
and their minds
in touch with
their lips"

Gospel Reading

Luke 18 : 1-8

There is no parable like this in the other Gospels, and what a surprise it is. Jesus has been talking of the suddenness of events, and especially of death (17:22-37), life pictured as uncertain and chancy: no pattern discernable. Now, in today's reading, Jesus shows how to hold life and each day steady - by prayer.

The parable implies that prayer is not answered, which seems the common human experience - when answer finally comes it may be a long time after the prayer began. The teaching is not encouraging: God takes a long time to listen and answer.

The judge appears to be an ugly image of God, and the widow is a pathetic helpless woman who needs an answer but must wait. Only perseverance, not justice, will bring her answer. Yet God wants justice to be done (v.7) even when he delays granting requests. Jesus does not say why God delays - he seems to accept that delay is part of prayer.

At the end of time, Jesus comments, he may find no faith on earth. Is he suggesting we shall grow tired of praying, wearied with no answers to our prayer?

Questions of Faith

Answers to Prayer. In today's Gospel Jesus seems to expect delays in God's answer to prayer. We all have experienced those delays - even no answer at all. We know the ridicule ("Where is your God?") that may be directed at believers when natural disasters or cruel conflicts occur. We ask the same question, but continue to believe and try to trust God. If an answer that we can understand finally comes we may look back and see other blessings granted, because of our waiting faithfully; but often there is no obvious answer and we enter the darkness of faith ("I do believe, help my unbelief") and share the darkness with unbelievers, understanding better their pain. Is that God's plan - a darkness holding unbeliever and believer?

People of God

The Bishop's Secretary had a fine name amongst his fellow priests. There was a reply to their letters within 48 hours, always. When people asked him how he was able to answer so quickly he explained that the writing of the letters would take the same time done today or delayed for three weeks. So why not reply immediately, which would be courteous and convenient to the correspondents? Such simple courtesy in an important position in the diocese gave the priests a sense of good communication and trust, and is a lesson that all of us might learn. To be approachable and pleasant is something we can be at all times. Our bad moods are unfair on those who were no cause of them. At home and at work we should be open and understanding to others, helping them through the day we share with them. Answering letters promptly is a gracious act. The priests appreciated it.