



THE LORD'S DAY

30th 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 35 : 12-14, 16-19

Read all chapter 35. The teaching is that holy living and prayerful worship belong together, and verses 1-10 give a vivid picture of someone living thus. Happy, dutiful, generous, reverent - the Lord loves and rewards the good person.

The Lord is pictured as giving generously, even rewarding seven times over: it is as though we cannot be more generous than God is.

Now begins today's reading. In God's goodness is a strong sense of justice. He listens to the voices of his little ones ("anawim"), is not open to bribery, treats everyone equally and does not favour even the widow, orphan or poor against others. God is always present when questions of justice need to be resolved.

The Lord wants the hearts of those who believe (v.16) to know that the prayer of the humble is invincible, but the Lord needs time to answer prayer (v.19). Why?

The author of Ecclesiasticus is Ben Sirach who lived in Jerusalem early in the 2nd century BC and wrote the book about 180 BC. It is rich in various forms of wisdom - moral, religious, prayer, psalms and practical instruction. Enjoy browsing it as part of your Lord's day.

SPIRITUAL MOODS

God is generous;
Paul is hurt;
Jesus is insulting.

*This week I shall . . .
have my own little mission*

Wisdom from the Saints



*"The Church exists by mission,
as fire exists by burning"*

Emil Brunner

Second Reading

2 Timothy 4 : 6-8, 16-18

In much of Paul's letters to Timothy we read encouragement from an experienced apostle and Church leader to a timid young man who is well grounded in the Faith but doubtful of his ability to be a good bishop.

Now, in today's reading, we hear very personal feelings from Paul. He sounds desperately lonely (vv.9-18). Fellow apostles have deserted him, former friends betrayed him, he is worried about personal possessions (v.13) (which indicates insecurity) and no one had stood for his defence at court.

He seems to feel his life is swiftly coming to a close, seems joyfully resigned (vv.6-8) before we are surprised by a petulance in verses 9-18 because we expect someone looking heavenwards not to be bothered about earthly matters. Is it a weariness? Or is it someone writing in Paul's name who is imagining states of mind in Paul and does not connect them? Scholars agree that Paul did not write the Timothy and Titus letters but left the writing to Luke (v.10) or even that someone else wrote in Paul's name, basing the letters on Paul's pastoral teachings.

People of God

Missionaries. The Church has been on mission since its foundation on the feast of Pentecost in the year of the Lord's death and resurrection. We recall the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, sharing their faith in the risen Christ with their fellow Israelites. That Mission has continued for nearly 2,000 years and we think with gratitude of the men and women who have left all to follow Christ and take the faith throughout the world. But we also feel a similar gratitude for the good men and women who never went anywhere except home, church, neighbourhood, workplace, but who shared their faith and inspired others by their quiet sincerity and support. On World Mission Day we recognise, anew, the wonderful truth that God includes all of us in the Church's mission . . . and we remember all who have inspired us by their goodness, dedication and example.

Gospel Reading

Luke 18 : 9-14

Here is a parable in which each of us can star. We take the place of the humble tax collector, whilst others might give us the place of the proud Pharisee! "Church is full of hypocrites" sneers the man: "Come and join us, there's room for one more" comes the reply. We call each other Pharisees and sinners - but are they also you and me?

The parable is confrontational and unpleasant. We wonder why Jesus is so antagonistic and bold towards the Pharisees. Why does he seek enmity with them when some (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) were his friends?

The meaning of the parable is clear. Observing religious duties strictly, and even generously, is of little value if done with pride; whilst humbly acknowledging our sinfulness opens us to the mercy and forgiveness of God.

Note the final sentence, summing up the lesson, and see where else Jesus teaches the same truth - Luke 14:11, Matthew 18:4, 20:26, 23:12.

Questions of Faith

Religious Antagonism

The lives of some of our saints sees them praised for defending the Catholic Church. We admire their faith and love, but when we read some of what they wrote we are unpleasantly surprised at the insulting tones they sometimes use. We wonder if we need to insult and antagonise in order to justify our love of God and the Faith? We might win an argument by seeming to be more intelligent, but the mission of the Church is to win souls, not to defeat enemies. Peace, not victory, should be our purpose in explaining and defending the Faith. Truth we must not compromise but we should explain gently and with love - not to defeat opponents, but to win hearts and minds. Today's Gospel parable seems unworthy of Jesus, it is insulting and cruel.