



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 21st August 2022 - The Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for 21st August 2022 (Luke 13:22-30): The Narrow Door

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, "Sir, will there be only a few saved?" He said to them, "Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed. Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' but he will answer, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will find yourself saying, 'We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets,' but he will reply, 'I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!' Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last."



3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

The Gospel reading makes a point which is directly opposite to one found in the first reading. There the inhabitants of distant lands will come to draw salvation from Jerusalem. This is repeated in the Gospel, but the daunting corollary is also given to those nearer home and who are expecting to find their way into the heavenly city easily: don't sit back in complacent contentment that you have been called, or you may find the door slammed in your face. Matthew 7:21-23 has the same warning: it is not enough to keep calling out, 'Lord, Lord!' without actually doing the will of the Father. There is also the similar, more developed teaching in the parable of the wedding attendants - five who are wise with oil in their lamps, and five who are unprepared for the wedding feast. They too vainly cry, 'Lord, Lord!' from outside the door. Today's Gospel almost forms the centre-piece of the instructions to the disciples as they make their way with Jesus up to Jerusalem and to his Passion and Death. There is no cheap way to salvation: each disciple must take up the cross behind Jesus and follow to the end of the road. This teaching is the more striking in Luke, who stresses that both Jews and Gentiles will take part in the festival.

Are we complacent? How do we best journey on the road of salvation?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 21st August 2022



First Reading: *Salvation to the Nations*

Isaiah 66:18-21

The Lord says this: I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to witness my glory. I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud, Moshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan, to the distant islands that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory to the nations. As an offering to the Lord they will bring all your brothers, in horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on dromedaries, from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, says the Lord, like Israelites bringing oblations in clean vessels to the Temple of the Lord. And of some of them I will make priests and Levites, says the Lord.

The readings today are both inspiring and daunting. The first reading comes from the very last chapter of Isaiah. Israel has returned from exile, and settled down back in Jerusalem. The people have outgrown the frantic worry about mere survival under threat of extinction in exile, and can now afford to look outwards. In a similar way, a sign of a child's maturity is when she or he grows less self-preoccupied and can begin to be aware of the needs of others. Likewise, Israel now sees that the vocation of the Chosen People is not to be turned in on itself, but to bring the Lord's salvation to others. Isaiah prophesies that this wonderfully outlandish list of far-distant lands (Tarshish, Put, Lud, Tubal and Javan) will come to draw salvation from Jerusalem, and will take part in Jerusalem's own sacred worship. This text foreshadows the spread of the Gospel. As Christians we believe that all nations will somehow be saved by Christ, even though they do not know him. 'Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God,' says the Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council.

How can those who have never heard of Christ be saved by him?

Second Reading: *The Discipline of Suffering*

Hebrews 12:5-7. 11-13

Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as sons? My son, when the Lord corrects you, do not treat it lightly; but do not get discouraged when he reprimands you. For the Lord trains the ones that he loves and he punishes all those that he acknowledges as his sons. Suffering is part of your training; God is treating you as his sons. Has there ever been any son whose father did not train him? Of course, any punishment is most painful at the time, and far from pleasant; but later, in those on whom it has been used, it bears fruit in peace and goodness. So hold up your limp arms and steady your trembling knees and smooth out the path you tread; then the injured limb will not be wrenched, it will grow strong again.

What is the sense of all the suffering in the world around us, the constant pain, worry, loneliness, fear and frustration? Is all this distortion and misery really compatible with the belief in a God of love? The Letter to the Hebrews here gives one explanation: it is the loving training and discipline of a father which brings us to peace. In a world without pain would we ever turn to God? When all is going well, many of us can manage nicely without God! If our world falls apart, we need God to put it together again. Paul puts it slightly differently, seeing suffering as the privilege of sharing in Christ's own redemptive suffering. By enduring Christ's suffering in every age, the Church ensures that it truly is the body of Christ, the Servant of the Lord. But we can never be content with suffering. Jesus himself understood suffering, and he went out of his way to heal it in all its forms. We should also remember that, in an age when so many decry the selfishness and materialism of society, the generosity shown by so many for the alleviation of suffering, the care of the sick, the betterment of the underprivileged, is one of the signs of Christ at work in his society.

What sense does suffering make to you?

“In a world without pain
would we ever turn to God?”

The Wednesday Word: Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

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