



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 11th August 2019 - The Nineteenth 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 11th August 2019 (Luke 12:35-40): Being Ready for the Master's Return

Jesus said to his disciples: "See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."



3 Reflect

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

Just before the reading above, Jesus has warned in St Luke's Gospel about the peril of worldly possession. This is a danger about which Luke, writing to a prosperous audience, continually reminds his audience. Then Jesus issues a series of exhortations to be alert for the final meeting with the Lord, and a series of blessings on those who are so ready. Luke does not have a great scene of a universal final judgement (as Matthew's Gospel does with the parable of the sheep and the goats). For Luke there is no need to wait for a great final judgement scene at the end of the world; instead, with his Greek frame of mind, he is more interested in the individual judgement (for each of these parables concerns a single individual who is rewarded or punished). This is fully compatible with the notion that each individual's final judgement is at death, rather than all together at the end of the world. Most wonderful and startling is the promise (suggested by today's parable) that, after the Master's return at the judgement, he will himself serve the faithful servants.

How may we best be "ready" for the return of the Lord?

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 11th August 2019



First Reading: *A Contrast between Israel and Egypt*

Wisdom 18:6-9

That night had been foretold to our ancestors, so that, once they saw what kind of oaths they had put their trust in they would joyfully take courage. This was the expectation of your people, the saving of the virtuous and the ruin of their enemies; for by the same act with which you took vengeance on our foes you made us glorious by calling us to you. The devout children of worthy men offered sacrifice in secret and this divine pact they struck with one accord: that the saints would share the same blessings and dangers alike; and forthwith they had begun to chant the hymns of the fathers.

The Book of Wisdom is possibly the latest book of the Old Testament, written not in Hebrew but in Greek, for the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria, just a few years before the birth of Jesus. The book is written against the background of considerable hostility between the Jews and the Egyptians. It vigorously attacks the Egyptian worship of idols and especially of sacred animals, but is also vividly aware of Israel's vocation to bring salvation to the whole world. The final section of the book, from which this reading is drawn, makes a series of rhetorical contrasts between the Egyptians and the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. At the very moment at which the Israelites were being delivered from Egypt, the Egyptians themselves were undergoing the destruction of the first-born. The promises to Abraham to make his children God's people were being fulfilled, while their enemies were being punished. This was the moment of the Passover when Israel offered sacrifice and agreed to the divine Law. Most first readings relate to the gospel reading; however, this reading prepares for the second reading, which is a meditation on the journey of God's People. For Christians the Passover of the Lord is the Eucharist.

How are God's promises fulfilled in the Eucharist?

Second Reading: *The People of God on Pilgrimage*

Hebrews 11:1-2. 8-12

Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen. It was for faith that our ancestors were commended. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going. By faith he arrived, as a foreigner, in the Promised Land, and lived there as if in a strange country, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. They lived there in tents while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God. It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore.

The Sunday reading of the Letter to the Hebrews is divided between Years B and C. The author of the letter is unknown; there is no reason to think that it was written by St Paul. Its purpose was to strengthen Jewish priests who had joined the Christian community and were yearning for the sacred rites of Judaism. So it sets out to show that the rites of Christianity are superior. This year we have four readings from the later part of the letter, of which this reading is the first. The principal theme is the journey of the People of God in faith. The faithfulness of the ancestors of Israel, as they journeyed in faith through trials and difficulties, reliant in turn on God's faithfulness, is still an inspiration. Outstanding among their acts of faithful obedience was Abraham willingness to sacrifice his only-begotten son, Isaac, seen by the Church as a foretaste of God's willingness to sacrifice his only-begotten Son to reconcile the world by his obedience. But whereas the resting place which Israel reached (the Promised Land of Israel) was not their final heavenly homeland, the Christian People of God is on pilgrimage to the final place of rest.

What is it that nourishes and sustains our faith as the People of God?

“ The principal theme is the journey of the People of God in faith. ”

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