



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 25th June 2023 - The Twelfth 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 Sunday 25th June 2023 - The Mission of the Apostles (Matthew 10:26-33)

Jesus instructed the twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops. 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows. 'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one, who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'



3 Reflect

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

This whole chapter of Matthew brings together and sums up what Jesus has to say to his apostles about declaring his teaching in the face of hostility and persecution. Jesus himself was fearless in proclaiming his message. He 'taught with authority', as the gospel constantly tells us. His disciples are sent out to do the same. We do not often meet with real persecution, although it may yet happen. The martyrs of communist Russia or Vietnam lived many years of peaceful Christianity before unexpectedly facing martyrdom. The monk martyrs of Algeria did not reckon on martyrdom when they went to Algeria. The only preparation for martyrdom can be fidelity and prayer. More often we face mockery for holding to Christian principles, and that too can be difficult to bear. We can be accused of narrow mindedness, lack of appreciation of human values, blind obedience, sentimentality, naivety, and a host of other hurtful slurs. Jesus did not promise that the Father would prevent the sparrows falling to the ground! Neither is it always easy to respond to such slurs with the patience and generosity as well as the truthfulness which Jesus would have shown. 'A spoonful of honey attracts more flies than a barrelful of vinegar', said St Francis de Sales.

Do I fearlessly proclaim the Gospel? What situations in the coming week might require courage? How can I grow in courage?

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.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 25th June 2023



First Reading: *The Persecuted Prophet*

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah said: I hear so many disparaging me, "Terror from every side!" Denounce him! Let us denounce him! All those who used to be my friends watched for my downfall, 'Perhaps he will be seduced into error. Then we will master him and take our revenge!' But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble, mastered, confounded by their failure; everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs. But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with justice, who scrutinise the loins and heart, let me see the vengeance you will take on them, for I have committed my cause to you. Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of evil men.

Jeremiah was the last prophet in Jerusalem before the Babylonians sacked the city and took most of the inhabitants into exile as slaves in 586 BC. He was sent as a final warning, to tell them all, from the king downwards, that disaster was impending if they did not amend their ways and turn back to the Lord. The authorities didn't like it, and accused him of sabotaging the morale of the citizens. He was arrested and dumped in an empty water storage pit to keep him quiet. He himself was a gentle soul and hated delivering this fierce message, complaining to the Lord about his tough and unpalatable task, and the persecution he suffered. But he stuck to his guns, and when the king tore up the threatening message he sent, Jeremiah merely repeated it – with more besides. He also had a message of hope, that eventually the Lord would give them a new covenant, with a new heart and a new spirit, so that they would again be the People of God. This reading is chosen to show in the Old Testament the courage and perseverance in proclaiming the message that, in the gospels, Jesus asks from his disciples.

When is it most difficult to take a stand and announce that I hold Christian principles? Do I manage to do this?

Second Reading: *Christ, the Second Adam*

St Paul to the Romans 5:12-15

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

Christ is the saviour, but how does he save? The Letter to the Romans is Paul's fullest explanation, and the heart of that teaching is that Christ is the Second Adam. Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, as described in Genesis, is not a simple historical story of one particular sin. It is the paradigm of all sin, the paradigm or analysis of all human failure, the process of turning away from God's commandments in pride and independence: 'I know better than God what is good for me.' We are children of Adam in so far as we have sinned, and Adam's sin sums up that of all humanity. At the same time, Adam is not only the type, but also the founder of all humanity. Christ, by way of contrast, is the second founder of all humanity. His act of perfect obedience to his Father on the cross transcends and heals this act of disobedience committed by the first Adam. Only Christ's act of loving obedience could be great enough to do this. It had to be an act of a man, but not of a mere man. We are members of this new humanity in so far as we join ourselves to Christ, put all our trust and hope in him.

Can you see any similarity between the sin of Adam and our own sins?

“Only Christ's act of loving obedience could be great enough to do this.”

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