

THE *Wednesday* WORD



Encountering Christ The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families



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.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, 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.

1

Read The Gospel for Sunday 9th June 2024 JESUS REJECTED

Jesus went home with his disciples, and such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal. When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take charge of him, convinced he was out of his mind. The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, 'Beelzebul is in him,' and, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts devils out.' So he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. And if a household is divided against itself, that household can never stand. Now if Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he cannot stand either – it is the end of him. But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first. Only then can he burgle his house. 'I tell you solemnly, all men's sins will be forgiven, and all their blasphemies; but let anyone blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and he will never have forgiveness: he is guilty of an eternal sin.' This was because they were saying, 'An unclean spirit is in him.' His mother and brothers now arrived and, standing outside, sent in a message asking for him. A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed to him, 'Your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.' He replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking round at those sitting in a circle about him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and mother.'

Taken from Mark 3:20-35 The Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

2

Reflect After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

The first stage of Jesus' ministry comes to an end. He is rejected as 'out of his mind' by his own family. Then he is rejected by the scribes as being in league with Beelzebul. Finally, his family again arrive, looking for him, and he turns to those who are listening to him as his true family. This all leads into the Parable of the Sower, which seems to be Jesus' reflection on his rejection by most people, and his fruitful acceptance by a small number of disciples. It is, of course, significant that the scribes cannot deny that he drives out evil spirits. If even his enemies are forced to admit it, it must be true. The best they can do is sarcastically to ascribe his powers to the chief of evil spirits, here named 'Beelzebub' or 'Beelzebul' (two different versions of the text). The former name means 'lord of the flies', probably a mocking corruption of the latter, which means 'lord prince', the title of a local deity. The whole scene presents an agonizing picture of the isolation of Jesus. In Luke's version of the scene, by a very slight adjustment, Jesus' mother and brothers are the prime example of those who hear the word of God and keep it. **Did Jesus feel disappointment and isolation as we do?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

3

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. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, patience, humility, joy, forgiveness, self-control, courage, generosity, faith or something else.

4

Pray for Families

This Wednesday's word for our school families is FAMILY!

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of **Sunday 9th June 2024**



1st Reading: Genesis 3.9-15, 20

The Aftermath of the Fall

I will make you enemies of each other: you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring. The Lord God called to the man after he had eaten of the tree. 'Where are you?' he asked. 'I heard the sound of you in the garden,' he replied 'I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.' 'Who told you that you were naked?' he asked. 'Have you been eating of the tree I forbade you to eat?' The man replied, 'It was the woman you put with me; she gave me the fruit, and I ate it.' Then the Lord God asked the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The Woman replied, 'The serpent tempted me and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, 'Be accursed beyond all cattle, all wild beasts. You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust every day of your life. I will make you enemies of each other: you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring. It will crush your head and you will strike its heel.'



The story of the Fall is an analysis of human temptation and sin. Sin brings shame on us: we do our best, like both the man and the woman, to blame someone else, but in the end we know we are defenceless and naked before God. We know that we deserve our penalties, but the wonderful thing about the biblical story is that God continues to care for us: he himself thoughtfully sews clothes for the man and the woman to hide their embarrassment. More important, God promises that evil will not triumph for ever. The penalties of hard labour and pain come not from divine vindictiveness but from human sinfulness: we are no longer in perfect harmony with God. If we were in harmony with God our confidence in him would spare us the pain. The reading pairs with the gospel reading, since it introduces Satan, the Tempter. The final bit is a 'Just So Story' of the animal world, explaining how the sinewy snake came into being: the proud, fiery serpent lost its legs and was reduced to being a mere big worm.

What does the story teach us about human sin?



Paul looks forward to 'the weight of glory' that must be the goal of every Christian



2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 4.13-5.1

The Weight of Glory

We believe, and therefore we speak. As we have the same spirit of faith that is mentioned in scripture – I believed and therefore I spoke – we too believe and therefore we too speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our turn, and put us by his side and you with us. You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God. That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day. Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. And so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal. For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.



Is this an older Paul, who feels that he is failing, ('this human nature of ours falling into decay'), and is looking forward to death, or rather to the weight of glory at the Resurrection? In last Sunday's reading, he was positive enough, bouncing up again after the hard knocks received in the gladiatorial combats of life. Contrariwise, in Philippians 1.21, he is caught in a dilemma and writes: 'Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would be a positive gain.' Such is his faith and conviction of the saving power of Christ that he longs to be fully united with Christ. He looks forward to 'the weight of glory' that must be the goal of every Christian. Glory is a specifically divine property. Moses was allowed to see the awesome divine glory, but the face of God he could not see. Isaiah was bowled over by his experience of the divine glory in the Temple, contrasting with his own awareness of his uncleanness. It seems that for Paul to feel 'the utterly incomparable, eternal weight of glory' is to be bathed in the divine presence and to enjoy eternally the company of God.

No one can see God and live, but how do you imagine the 'weight of God's glory'?

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

**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**