



**Encountering Christ**  
Prayerfully preparing for the  
Sunday Mass and praying in  
particular for our school families



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - The Sixth 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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - Jesus Teaches the True Meaning of the Law (Matthew 5:20-22.27-28.33-34.37)**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court. You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'



## 3 Reflect

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

*Jesus is the completion of the Law of God, given to Israel through Moses. He has come not to sweep it away but to perfect it. In this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew has gathered together six instances (four this week, two in next Sunday's Gospel) of the ways in which Jesus brings the Law to perfection. The first factor to notice, however, is that Jesus does not hesitate to adjust the divine Law on his own authority, for he too has divine authority. Each amendment begins with a statement of the Old Law and boldly goes on, 'But I say this to you...'. Each of the alterations has its own character. The first is about enmity, the sixth about love. About enmity, it is not enough merely to forego violent injury; we must even expel enmity from our hearts, positively seeking reconciliation, whether the offence is our fault or not. About lust, it is similarly not enough to forego acts of lust; we must not even harbour such thoughts in our hearts. About truth, it is not enough to keep a legal oath; we must be people whose every word can be relied upon. These are Jesus' demanding standards.*

***Have I allowed any enmity to fester? Can I solve it now? Am I a person whose every word can be trusted as true?***

**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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023



## First Reading: *Contrasts*

### **Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20**

If you wish, you can keep the commandments; to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him; he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless; he has given no one permission to sin.

*Readings from Ecclesiasticus are rare occurrences in the Sunday cycle: it is good to remind ourselves of the origin of the book. It is one of the Wisdom Books of the Bible, written towards the end of the Old Testament period, when prophecy had come to an end. The fierce corrections of the prophets and their inspiring promises of coming salvation were no more, and the word of the Lord came in collections of wise sayings to guide conduct, inspired by acute awareness that the Lord was the source of all wisdom. This collection of wisdom was brought together by a sage and experienced scribe of the Law at Jerusalem named Ben Sira. It was taken by the author's grandson to Alexandria in Egypt and translated into Greek for the Greek-speaking Jews there. Only recently have manuscripts been discovered containing most of the Hebrew original. In today's passage Ben Sira sets out the contrasting choices which face us, to which we can freely reach out our hands. It is one of the chief passages in the Bible which stresses our own free will. Of our own volition we may turn to good or to ill. God calls for our love and response, but does not force us, for love must be a free act.*

*How can I freely express my love for God and for his loving plan?*

## Second Reading: *The Hidden Wisdom of God*

### **1 Corinthians 2:6-10**

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

*Among the recipients of this letter of Paul's were philosophers who prided themselves on their wisdom, the Greek understanding of the nature of things and the structure of the universe. The wisdom which Paul teaches is beyond human understanding. What, then, is the point of it? Firstly, it concerns the mystery hidden throughout the earlier history of the world and of humankind. The plan of God has been working itself out throughout the history, throughout the affectionate, the tender, the forgiving dealings of God with human beings. But it has been made clear only by the coming of Christ into human history as the keystone which makes sense of the whole structure. Secondly, we can still not fully understand it. We still have not fathomed the meaning of life and all its strange and unpredictable twistings and turnings. And yet we are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning, and that this meaning is for our glory. Whatever goes wrong, as well as whatever goes right is, by God's grace, so arranged for our glory. Thirdly, this same Spirit which penetrates the meaning of everything, even the depths of God, is the divine Spirit which lives in us and informs us as Christians.*

*What seeming disasters in your life have in fact turned out to be part of the saving plan of God for you?*

“ We are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning [to life], and that this meaning is for our glory. ”

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