



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 5th June 2016 - The Tenth 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 5th June 2016 (Luke 7:11-17): The Son of the Widow of Nain

Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople were with him. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her. "Do not cry," he said. Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, "Young man, I tell you to get up." And the dead man sat up and began to walk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, "A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people." And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.



3 Reflect

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

In his gospel, Luke is always careful to point out that women are saved no less than men. Mark tells the story of the raising to life of the daughter (woman) of Jairus (man). Luke now tells the story of the raising to life of the son (man) of this widow (woman). Similarly, an angel announces the miraculous birth of John the Baptist to his father, and of Jesus to his mother – and who comes out of it better? Zechariah is struck dumb, and Mary is blessed! The Markan story of the man losing a sheep is balanced by the Lukan story of a woman losing a coin; each rejoices as an image of the rejoicing in heaven. The story of the widow's son is told with typical Lukan delicacy. He stresses that this was her only son, so her only hope in the world, and that Jesus feels for her. At the end of the passage, the acclamation that a great prophet is arisen has overtones of the stories and teaching of the Old Testament. In Luke, Jesus is frequently characterized as a prophet: his foreknowledge and prophesying are stressed, and finally his Ascension is described in terms reminiscent of Elijah's ascent into heaven in a fiery chariot.

Has the Church returned to equal treatment of women and men?

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 5th June 2016



First Reading: *Elijah Raises a Boy to Life*

1 Kings 17:17-24

The son of the mistress of the house fell sick; his illness was so severe that in the end he had no breath left in him. And the woman said to Elijah, "What quarrel have you with me, man of God? Have you come here to bring my sins home to me and to kill my son?" "Give me your son," he said, and taking him from her lap, carried him to the upper room where he was staying and laid him on his own bed. He cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, do you mean to bring grief to the widow who is looking after me by killing her son?" He stretched himself on the child three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, may the soul of this child, I beg you, come into him again!" The Lord heard the prayer of Elijah and the soul of the child returned to him again and he revived. Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. "Look," Elijah said, "your son is alive." And the woman replied, "Now I know you are a man of God and the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth itself."

This is the second of two stories about Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. Jesus alludes to the first story in his programmatic speech at Nazareth in Luke 4:25-26; it is an example of a miracle worked outside Israel, a reminder that Jesus' mission was not only to the Jews, but also to the gentiles. Elijah was sent to this widow when there was no food in Israel, and she provided something for him out of her meagre supplies. As a result, the supplies did not run out. However, at first, she seems to get little satisfaction for this, since her son now dies suddenly. But then, he is brought back to life by the prophet, and all ends well! More or less the same story of raising the son of the prophet's hostess to life is told of the prophet Elisha, the successor of Elijah (2 Kings 4:18-37); it may be that either there was confusion between the two prophets, or that a deliberate attempt was being made to show the similarity of their missions. In the rabbinic tradition, a very similar story of raising a boy to life is told of one of the charismatic Galilean rabbis contemporary with Jesus. The similarity between these miraculous stories and those of Jesus indicate that Jesus should be (at least) recognised as a great prophet and rabbi; other parts of the Gospel show us that he is more than this.

Are we bound to believe that Jesus' miracles were unique? In what way were they unique?

Second Reading: *Paul's Mission from God*

Galatians 1:11-19

The Good News I preached is not a human message that I was given by men; it is something I learnt only through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You must have heard of my career as a practising Jew, how merciless I was in persecuting the Church of God, how much damage I did to it, how I stood out among other Jews of my generation, and how enthusiastic I was for the traditions of my ancestors. Then God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother's womb, called me through his grace and chose to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the pagans. I did not stop to discuss this with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were already apostles before me, but I went off to Arabia at once and later went straight back from there to Damascus. Even when after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days, I did not see any of the other apostles; I only saw James, the brother of the Lord.

Galatians is one of the very early letters of Paul. His authority could be, and was, questioned. Other missionaries had come down from Jerusalem to the churches of Galatia, and had contradicted Paul's message that Christians need not obey the Law of Moses. In reply, Paul forcefully insists that his authority was not dependent on the apostles of Jerusalem, but that he was directly called by God, and – like the prophet Jeremiah – set apart from his mother's womb. To show the power of God's call, he recounts how utterly opposed to Christianity he had been before he was called, violently persecuting Christians. His conversion meant a total reversal. So certain was he in his call that he recognised that he had no need to confer at the time with the human authorities among the early Church, and only spent a short time with Peter and James after three years. In fact, he goes on to relate, he even stood up to Peter and he told Peter that he was in the wrong; through such (no doubt heated) discussion Peter changed his stance. Henceforth, Paul is careful in his letters to make explicit that he was 'called to be an apostle', not merely appointed as a delegate to other human authorities; his message is the message of God.

What can we do to help overcome divisions and quarrels in the Church?

“Everything is new about the Christian baptized into Christ.”

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