



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 19th June 2016 - 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 19th June 2016 (Luke 9:18-24): Peter's Profession of Faith

One day when Jesus was praying alone in the presence of his disciples he put this question to them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; others Elijah; and others say one of the ancient prophets come back to life." "But you," he said, "who do you say I am?" It was Peter who spoke up. "The Christ of God," he said. But he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone anything about this. "The Son of Man," he said, "is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day." Then to all he said, "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, that man will save it."



3 Reflect

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

Peter's profession of faith in Jesus as God's anointed messenger occurs, of course, in each of the first three gospels, but each relates it in his special way. Luke, for whom prayer is so important, stresses that Jesus was at prayer, as he was at so many special moments in this gospel, such as when Jesus chooses the disciples, at the Transfiguration or when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. In Mark, Peter's profession is the turning-point of the gospel, a break-through for Peter after a long and frustrating period of inability to understand who Jesus was. But only a partial break-through, for he still cannot grasp the message that Jesus' mission involves suffering. Matthew strengthens Peter's confession to 'the Christ, the Son of God' and then has Jesus congratulate Peter with the promise of the keys. He also intensifies both Peter's protest at the idea of Jesus' suffering, and Jesus' correspondingly fierce rebuke to Peter. This Sunday's Lukan version gives neither praise nor blame to Peter, but hurries straight on to the message of suffering. Neither Jesus nor his followers can win through to the crown of Resurrection without first undergoing the Passion. Luke quietly generalises the message because Jesus speaks not just to his disciples but to 'all'. What - me too?

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus and to "lose" our lives for his sake?

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 19th June 2016



First Reading: *The One whom they have Pierced*

Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1

It is the Lord who speaks: "Over the House of David and the citizens of Jerusalem I will pour out a spirit of kindness and prayer. They will look on the one whom they have pierced; they will mourn for him as for an only son, and weep for him as people weep for a first-born child. When that day comes, there will be great mourning in Judah, like the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. When that day comes, a fountain will be opened for the House of David and the citizens of Jerusalem, for sin and impurity."

The meaning, the translation and even the text itself of this reading are quite obscure. This, one of the latest of prophetic passages (perhaps even in the second century before Christ), is expressing confidence in the restoration of Jerusalem. The city has been dominated by foreign powers, but God promises that he will pour out on it his favour and compassion. The deliverance of Jerusalem is somehow connected with 'one whom they have pierced', for whom there will be great mourning. For us the importance is that in the New Testament this obscure 'one whom they have pierced' and the 'only son' is considered to be the one who pre-figures Jesus, the only-begotten Son and Suffering Servant of the Lord, whose passion and death is the means of salvation for the whole world. The passage is applied by St John to Jesus whose side was pierced by the soldier's lance in the Gospel, and again in the opening vision of the glorious risen Christ in the Book of Revelation: 'He is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him'. His triumph will be acknowledged by the whole world, and his wounds will be his glory. This passage, therefore, prepares us for today's Gospel passage.

How does this prophecy anticipate the suffering of Christ?

Second Reading: *Baptized into Christ*

Galatians 3:26-29

You are, all of you, sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Merely by belonging to Christ you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he was promised.

By an unfortunate accident of calendar, this year we miss the first three of six Sunday readings from the forceful letter of Paul to the Galatians. In a state of fury, bluntly calling them 'Fools', Paul is writing to these new converts to Christianity to counter the instructions they have received from messengers from Jerusalem. These had insisted that the Galatians must still obey the Jewish Law. Paul replies that those who have been baptized into Christ are wholly renewed. All previous conditions (sex, status, race) have fallen away, and all are simply now adopted sons and daughters of God. To 'baptize' means to 'dip', as in a river, and Paul's image is that those who have been dipped into Christ's death rise with him in his Resurrection, dripping and soaked through with Christ. This is not a mere external clothing, but it means living with Christ's own life – 'I live now, no, not I, but Christ lives in me' – and what matters most is that we are adopted to sonship with Christ, and so have become in him heirs to the divine promises given to Abraham. Living with Christ's life we can address God with the intimate Aramaic family word for father, 'Abba', used by Jesus himself.

“Those who have been baptized into Christ are wholly renewed.”

If I use the family-word 'Abba' when speaking to God, what is this trying to say about my relationship with him? What does St Paul have to teach us about the meaning of Baptism? What difference does Baptism make to my life?

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