



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 3rd July 2016 - The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

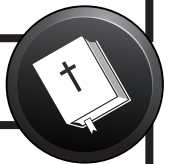
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this 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 3rd July 2016 (Luke 10:1-9): The Mission in Action

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you go into, let your first words be, 'Peace to this house!' And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, 'The kingdom of God is very near to you'."



3 Reflect

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

The instructions to the seventy-two who are sent out are direct and simple. They are really sent out like lambs among wolves, without food, without distractions, without baggage, without spares. The version in the Gospel of Mark allows them sandals, presumably to enable them to make more speed on their journey, for the urgency of the task is paramount. They are not to be distracted by picking and choosing their accommodation or their food. Direct, too, is their method: to impart the blessing of peace and to heal. No second chance: if the blessing is rejected, away they go, leaving the town to a fate worse than that of Sodom! Last Sunday's gospel demanded an uncompromisingly whole-hearted response to Jesus from the apostles. This Sunday the apostles demand the same response to their own message. Again the absolute demands of Jesus! There is a wonderful simplicity about this message of the coming of the Kingdom: all that is involved is peace and healing. No squabbles, no fripperies, no complications of doctrine. If these Kingdom values can remain the focus of our Christian vision, we may make some progress towards bringing the Kingdom of God to reality in our own surroundings.

What would you say are the most important aspects of the Kingdom? What sort of healing can I bring in my own surroundings?

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 3rd July 2016



First Reading: *As a Mother Comforts her Child*

Isaiah 66:10-14

Rejoice, Jerusalem, be glad for her, all you who love her! Rejoice, rejoice for her, all you who mourned her! That you may be suckled, filled, from her consoling breast, that you may savour with delight her glorious breasts. For thus says the Lord: Now towards her I send flowing peace, like a river, and like a stream in spate the glory of the nations. At her breast will her nurslings be carried and fondled in her lap. Like a son comforted by his mother will I comfort you. And by Jerusalem you will be comforted. At the sight your heart will rejoice, and your bones flourish like the grass. To his servants the Lord will reveal his hand.

We are used to the imagery of God as Father, the creator and initiator of all things. But there is no gender or sex in God; God infinitely transcends such human limitations. So there is also room and need for a gentler image of God as mother: 'As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you', promises this passage, even daring to invoke that most maternal and intimately loving and trusting image of the child feeding at its mother's breast. Such imagery for God as mother occurs in other biblical passages as well, such as Psalm 131, where the contentment of the believer in God is compared to that of a little child in its mother's embrace; or Hosea 11:1-4, where God's loving care is described in terms of a parent leading and feeding a child. The child is now growing up, and God's maternal love continues throughout our lives. One of the chief Hebrew words describing God's love for his people is rahamim, the plural of rehem, which means a mother's womb. God's love involves, therefore, that instinctive gut-feeling of a mother for her child, which can never be destroyed or overruled.

What is scripture teaching us when it uses the imagery of parent to describe God? How may we make use of such imagery in prayer?

Second Reading: *The Triumph of the Cross*

Galatians 6:14-18

The only thing I can boast about is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. It does not matter if a person is circumcised or not; what matters is for him to become an altogether new creature. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, who form the Israel of God. I want no more trouble from anybody after this; the marks on my body are those of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, my brothers. Amen.

This is the final reading for this year from the fiery letter to the Galatians. It also provides the entry antiphon for Maundy Thursday, as we enter upon the celebration of the Lord's Passion and Death. Paul is again comparing the Law and the Cross. Instead of glorying in the physical mark of circumcision, the symbol of subjection to the Law, he glories in the Cross 'branded on' his body (he must mean in a symbolic sense by baptism - unless he means the scars of the floggings he received) which makes him a new creation. Everything is new about the Christian baptized into Christ, having left behind the old, mundane pre-occupations to embrace the new freedom inspired by the Spirit. This sounds all very well, but we know (and Paul knows too) that it is a constant challenge to bring this new life and new scale of values into reality: 'The good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want - that is what I do', he laments when writing to the Romans. We are already reconciled to God, but only once does Paul say we are already saved. Even then it is 'saved in hope', which puts it into the future.

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

How far does my new life in Christ express a new scale of values?

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