



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2016 - The Twenty Eighth 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 9<sup>th</sup> October 2016 (Luke 17:11-19): The Samaritan Leper**

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten lepers came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, "Jesus! Master! Take pity on us." When he saw them he said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." Now as they were going away they were cleansed. Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This made Jesus say, "Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner." And he said to the man, "Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you."



**3** Reflect

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

*We see why the story of the cure of Naaman the leper has been chosen as our first reading today: in the Gospel reading we find another cure of a foreigner, and not an ordinary foreigner, but a hated foreigner. There was a cordial hatred between Jews and Samaritans: for the Jews, the Samaritans were a wretched hybrid race, who accepted only part of the Jewish Bible, and had their own ideas about the coming Messiah. Yet Luke has already recounted the story of the Good Samaritan, who succours the wounded traveller who had been neglected by Jewish priest and Levite. Now only a Samaritan comes back to thank Jesus for the cure from leprosy. Samaritans are the foreigners geographically nearest to Jesus, but hated by the Jews. If the Samaritans can set an example to the Jews, so can many other foreigners. In his initial proclamation Jesus promises salvation to the gentiles, and Luke misses no opportunity to show us gentiles ripe for salvation: the centurion of Capernaum who built the synagogue and whose son is cured, the guests for the banquet called in from highways and byways. Luke is preparing for his second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, where the Good News will spread to the ends of the earth, even to Rome itself.*

**Christians believe that no race is superior to another. Why?**

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 9<sup>th</sup> October 2016



## First Reading: *Naaman the Syrian*

### 2 Kings 5:14-17

Naaman the leper went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, as Elisha had told him to do. And his flesh became clean once more like the flesh of a little child. Returning to Elisha with his whole escort, he went in and stood before him. "Now I know," he said, "that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now, please, accept a present from your servant." But Elisha replied, "As the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing." Naaman pressed him to accept, but he refused. Then Naaman said, "Since your answer is 'No', allow your servant to be given as much earth as two mules may carry, because your servant will no longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any god except the Lord."

*This little excerpt is the stub-end of one of the most delightful stories in the Bible (read it!). It pairs with the Gospel reading. In his opening proclamation in the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus declares that he has come to save the gentiles too, just as Elisha did, citing Naaman as an example. Today we read about the cure (the saving of Naaman) itself. The odd bit about two 'muleloads' of earth is the result of the belief, still persistent at that time, that the God of Israel could be worshipped only on the soil of Israel – so take some soil with you! Naaman wants to express his gratitude to the Lord at his home too. At the time attributed to Elisha and Naaman (mid 9th century BC) the Lord was accepted as God of Israel, the Sovereign and Protector of Israel, but this implied nothing about other nations. It was not until the Babylonian exile, when Israel was confronted with the multiple gods of Babylon, that Israel came to believe that the Lord was the God of the whole earth, the whole universe, and that all the other deities, such as those of sun and moon and stars, were simply timing-devices plugged into the vault of heaven by the Lord himself. God reveals himself to Israel, and to us, gradually.*

**How has your faith deepened or developed over the years?**

## Second Reading: *The Grounds for Hope*

### 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Remember the Good News that I carry, 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David'; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal - but they cannot chain up God's news. So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen, so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it. Here is a saying that you can rely on: if we have died with him, then we shall live with him; if we hold firm, then we shall reign with him; if we disown him, then he will disown us; we may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, for he cannot disown his own self.

*If Paul is chained as a criminal, at least he gives the grounds for his hope and his security: 'the saying is sure'. The kernel of the Good News is the Resurrection, and that is enough for Paul. If Christ is risen from the dead, nothing more is required; this in itself is the fulfilment of the promises to David. Paul quotes a little symmetrical hymn ('if we have died with him...') which was no doubt sung by the early Christian congregations. The earliest external evidence to the Christian liturgy is a letter from Pliny, governor of a province in what is now northern Turkey, in the early second century, written only a few decades after the Second Letter to Timothy. He has examined Christians under torture and sends his findings to the Emperor. Christians, he says, meet on a set day (presumably Sunday), make oaths of loyalty to one other, sing a hymn 'to Christ as to a god', and then have a meal (presumably the Eucharist). The hymnic phrases in today's reading could be part of just such a hymn mentioned by Pliny, sung under the pressures of persecution, celebrating the union of Christ with his followers, and Christ's fidelity to his own people, whatever they do to him: if we are faithless, he remains faithful.*

**What does the hymn in this letter to Timothy teach us about life in Christ?**

“The kernel of the Good News is the Resurrection.”

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