



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 18th November 2018 - The Thirty Third Sunday of 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 18th November 2018 (Mark 13:24-32): The Coming of the Son of Man

Jesus said to his disciples, "In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven. Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father."



3 Reflect

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

Jesus saw his mission to be the establishment of the sovereignty of God, the kingship and rule of God over the world, including over our rebellious human hearts. Using the language and imagery of his time, he described this 'earth-shaking' event in terms of cosmic disturbances. The coming of God, the Day of the Lord, would constitute the end of the world as we know it. As Christians we must acknowledge that the death and resurrection of Christ utterly changed the world for ever; it was the Day of the Lord. And yet the world still continues, and we have still to prepare for a future Day of the Lord, when we will come into that awesome presence. That meeting is pictured in terms of collapse and upheaval, our world turned upside down. At death all our familiar realities cease, even the ticking of the clock; at death, time ceases to have meaning. We do not know, and have no need to know, when or how this will occur. For all, it will come; everyone will meet the Lord, but will we meet Him all together or individually? The Son of Man will gather his own, in great power and glory.

What does this reading have to teach us about the coming of the Son of Man? Is it something we should be afraid of? How do we best prepare for that Day?

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 18th November 2018



First Reading: *The Resurrection of the Dead*

Daniel 12:1-3

At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.

We are coming towards the end of the Church's year. This passage looks towards the end of all things. It is a crucial passage, for here, for the first time in the Bible, the resurrection of the dead is proclaimed. The Book of Daniel was written during a great persecution of the Jews, a couple of centuries before Christ. Texts, like this in the prophet Daniel, speak clearly of the resurrection of those who remain true to the Lord. The earlier Israelites pictured the after-life as a sort of powerless, shadowy half-existence known as Sheol, where the dead could not even praise God. Yet there had also been many hints of conviction that God would never desert those who love him: 'I know that my Redeemer lives, and that from my flesh I will look on God,' said Job. Only now in the Book of Daniel, under the stress of the death of martyrs in the persecution, is the full truth revealed: at the end of time God will intervene to draw his own to himself in fullness of life. In this reading 'many will awaken' does not mean that some will not awaken; it merely indicates a vast number, the almost limitless multitude of the dead.

Martyrs witness to the life of the Lord and the truth of His resurrection: which martyrs do you admire most?

Second Reading: *One Single Sacrifice*

Hebrews 10:11-14. 18

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. Christ, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

“Christ's offering in obedience was complete.”

In this, our last reading from the Letter to the Hebrews, Christ is pictured (in the terms of the coronation song, Psalm 110) as the Son of God, sharing God's throne. His sacrifice on the Cross was not an act of vengeance by God, inflicting on Jesus the pains which we deserve, then suddenly changing his mind and rehabilitating his Son. No, it was the consummate act of loving obedience, by which Jesus, on behalf of all humanity, reversed the disobedience of Adam and united us all to God. The resurrection (by which Christ was raised to glory, the Son of God in power) was God's action by which this renewal of life occurred. The sacrifices of the Old Law were partial, temporary and needed to be repeated. Christ's offering in obedience was complete, and could never be repeated. Writing to the Corinthians Paul uses the same psalm to show that Christ is waiting to put the last great enemy, Death, under his feet, and so present the Kingdom to His Father. This is the glorious awakening which is described in the first reading from Daniel.

How does this reading from the Letter to the Hebrews enrich our understanding of the Resurrection?

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