



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 29th September 2019 - The Twenty Sixth 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 29th September 2019 (Luke 16:19-31): The Rich Man and Lazarus

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even came and licked his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In his torment in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off with Lazarus in his bosom. So he cried out, 'Father Abraham, pity me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.' 'My son,' Abraham replied, 'remember that during your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. But that is not all: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours.' The rich man replied, 'Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's house, since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not come to this place of torment too.' 'They have Moses and the prophets,' said Abraham, 'let them listen to them.' 'Ah no, father Abraham,' said the rich man, 'but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent.' Then Abraham said to him, 'If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead.'"

3 Reflect

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

This story told by Jesus occurs only in Luke. It is another of those dreadful warnings about the danger of wealth, for Luke's Gospel is often known as the Gospel to the Poor. Luke shows us those who blithely turn down their invitation to the banquet of the Kingdom in order to try out their new holiday cottage, their latest Porsche or the re-fitted yacht. Through the Crafty Steward he reminds us that those who want to make money are often sharper than those who want to make the Kingdom. Through the Rich Fool he teaches us that well-stocked barns are no remedy against death. For me there are three particularly horrible features of this parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man: firstly, the flea-ridden dogs licking Lazarus' sores: there are no pets in Palestine - dogs are either bristling guard-dogs or mangy curs. Secondly, the Rich Man's continuing self-absorption even after death: he still does not recognise Lazarus' existence and thinks only of his own burning tongue. Contrast this with Abraham's gentleness: it almost looks as though he would cross the chasm if he could. Thirdly, the obdurate brothers: they are just not willing to listen, even to the most startling news; nothing will distract them from their own selfish pre-occupations.

When was the last time I turned my back on someone who needed my help?

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 29th September 2019



First Reading: *Couch-potatoes*

Amos 6:1. 4-7

The almighty Lord says this: Woe to those ensconced so snugly in Zion and to those who feel so safe on the mountain of Samaria. Lying on ivory beds and sprawling on their divans, they dine on lambs from the flock, and stall-fattened veal; they bawl to the sound of the harp, they invent new instruments of music like David, they drink wine by the bowlful, and use the finest oil for anointing themselves, but about the ruin of Joseph they do not care at all. That is why they will be the first to be exiled; the sprawlers' revelry is over.

'Alas for those who lounge in front of the telly, munching their crisps and slurping their lager. Alas for those who zoom the streets, singing raucously along with their blaring radios.' Is Amos simply a middle-aged spoilsport, castigating the evils of his time? The real question is whether such "sprawlers" would ever manoeuvre themselves off the couch for the sake of the needy person at the door, whether they spring out of the car to help the blind person across the road. Following on from this: what about our own society? What can I do to help remedy the fundamental ills within society? What can I, helpless and half-hearted as I am, do to build on the ruins? How far can Jesus push me? One thing is sure, it is always one step further than my comfort-zone. The Lord may not be calling me to be a Charles de Foucauld, an Oscar Romero, a Mother Teresa, but he always wants me to go one step nearer him, whatever my state of life, one step at a time out of my comfort-zone in response to his challenge. I can never say I have done all I need to do.

What more am I able and willing to do for someone in need? Is there something I can do for my community – or indeed to help the wider society?

Second Reading: *Sevenfold Praise*

1 Timothy 6:11-16

As a man dedicated to God, you must aim to be saintly and religious, filled with faith and love, patient and gentle. Fight the good fight of the faith and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were called when you made your profession and spoke up for the truth in front of many witnesses. Now, before God the source of all life and before Jesus Christ, who spoke up as a witness for the truth in front of Pontius Pilate, I put to you the duty of doing all that you have been told, with no faults or failures, until the Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who at the due time will be revealed by God, the blessed and only Ruler of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who alone is immortal, whose home is in inaccessible light, whom no man has seen and no man is able to see: to him be honour and everlasting power. Amen.

The letters to Timothy contain several little hymns of praise to Christ. After his final exhortation to Timothy to perseverance and to witness, the author gives a concluding doxology (after he mentions the Appearing of the Lord) as an inspiration for his - and our - devotion to Christ, enumerating seven titles of Christ's pre-eminence. In this egalitarian world, where TV has almost abolished the mystique of royalty, the first three titles of royalty (Ruler, King of kings and Lord of lords) may not move us too much. But who would absent themselves if even a 'minor royal' was coming on a visit to office or factory? So how would we respond if it were to be the Lord of all lords himself arriving? The other awesome titles used for Christ cannot fail to move us. Christ possesses as his own the immortality for which we crave. He dwells in the sphere of faultless light which lies beyond our comprehension. He is beyond our sight, our understanding, even our imagination; his are power and honour without end. We can only be amazed at how far he is beyond us, and yet that he walked beside the Lake of Galilee with his chosen friends, and allowed himself to be humiliated in suffering and death before his exaltation.

In what small ways may we envisage God's glory?

“ He is beyond our sight, our understanding, even our imagination. ”

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