



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - The Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

**1** Relax & Remember

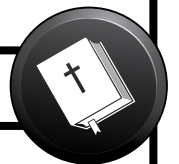
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this 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 Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - The New Israel (Matthew 9:36-10:8)**

When Jesus saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.' He summoned his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, the one who was to betray him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: 'Do not turn your steps to pagan territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. You received without charge, give without charge.'



**3** Reflect

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

*Jesus was concerned about his people. He wanted to bring to them the Kingdom of his Father, so he set out to heal them, and sent others out to do the same. His aim was to bring them the peace of God, to help them by ridding them of their worries, their sickness, their embarrassment at being lost sheep without a shepherd (God was always the shepherd in Israel). When he set up the twelve apostles he was making a New Israel, a new set of twelve tribes, as a permanent healing body, to make sure that the Kingdom of the Father and its peace and generosity would always be available. He was not setting up a clergy, a set of leaders, but appointing his own helpers in spreading God's Kingdom. That is what every Christian must do. Do I make it my business to spread the Kingdom or the Kingship of God? Am I a labourer in the harvest, trying to bring God's peace and healing to all the sick sheep? After all, I was made in the image of God, and God gave me the task of following on his creative work. And then Jesus called me, too, to work with him. Am I supposed to cure the sick and cast out devils?*

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 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023



## First Reading: *God chooses Israel to be his own possession*

### Exodus 19:2-6

From Rephidim the Israelites set out again: and when they reached the wilderness of Sinai, there in the wilderness they pitched their camp: there facing the mountain Israel pitched camp. Moses then went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Say this to the House of Jacob, declare this to the sons of Israel, "You yourselves have seen what I did with the Egyptians, how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. From this you know that now, if you obey my voice and hold fast to my covenant, you of all the nations shall be my very own, for all the earth is mine. I will count you a kingdom of priests a consecrated nation."

*This reading records the special moment when God chose Israel to be his own possession, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, formed of twelve tribes, just as in the gospel reading Jesus will choose Twelve to be the nucleus of his holy Kingdom. God had led them out of slavery in Egypt with a purpose: they were to be gradually formed and enlightened to bring God's Good News to the whole of creation. First they were given the Law (the Ten Commandments come just after this passage) which would teach them how the people of God must live out their vocation. 'Be holy as I am holy', acting in the image of God, completing God's work of creation. It was not going to be a smooth path. They rebelled already in the desert, hankering after the 'leeks and onions' of Egypt, and the history of Israel was to be a constant series of rebellion, recall and forgiveness – just like our relationship with God, full of failure and return. Formation always involves a fair amount of buffeting and correction, spiritual growing-pains as well as physical. Like ours, their learning process was slow and full of mistakes, but in the end they brought salvation into the world in the person of Jesus.*

*What can it mean that we are a kingdom of priests?*

## Second Reading: *Reconciled to God*

### St Paul to the Romans 5:6-11

We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

*The clue to the importance of this reading comes right at the end: we have been reconciled, but we shall be saved. Through the loving obedience of Christ on the Cross the yawning chasm between God and humanity represented by the disobedience of Adam has been closed, the hostility (hostility on the side of Adam not of any angry god) annulled. The boundless love of God can be given to us in the Spirit, so that we too may live by that love, and play out our lives under its influence. The join of these two readings gives a wonderful assurance: the Shepherd's love is such that it dwells in us in the Spirit and thereby empowers us to act with that love towards those around us. This is what is meant by living the life of Christ.*

*If I have already been put right with God, can I just float along and leave it all to God?*

“ This is what is meant by living the life of Christ. ”

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