



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 4th July 2021 - The Fourteenth 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 4th July 2021 (Mark 6:1-6): A Prophet Despised in His Own Country

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, "Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?" And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is only despised in his own country among his own relations and in his own house"; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.



3 Reflect

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

The very last sentence of the reading speaks of the people's lack of faith. What was this lack of faith? They recognized in Jesus an extraordinary wisdom and the power to perform miracles, but this seems not to have been enough. What more was needed? Faith is not the acceptance of a set of propositions ('I believe that the earth circles the sun', etc.). It is putting all my trust in God as my only hope. Abraham, the model of faith, went out into the desert, leaving everything on which he relied, everything that made him what he was. He even trusted God to get him out of the unbearable fix when God told him to sacrifice his only son. The townsfolk of Nazareth presumably thought they knew Jesus through and through. They were prepared to acknowledge his wisdom and his miracles. But they were not prepared to go further and see that God was at work in him, that he was the manifestation of God among them. It is all very well to admire Jesus, to think him a fine teacher and a heroic, honourable man, who gave everything for his high ideals; but unless we see God in him, the divine transcendence of all that is human, he cannot work the miracle of taking us to himself.

What does it mean to you to describe yourself or someone else as "a person of faith"?

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 4th July 2021



First Reading: *The Call of a Prophet*

Ezekiel 2:2-5

The spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard the Lord speaking to me. He said, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have turned against me. Till now they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me. The sons are defiant and obstinate; I am sending you to them, to say, 'The Lord says this.' Whether they listen or not, this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them."

This reading tells the story of the call of Ezekiel to be a prophet. There is an obvious parallel between the rejection of Ezekiel as a prophet by the 'rebels' and the rejection of Jesus by his own people of Nazareth. A prophet is not simply someone who foretells the future. The task of a prophet is to tell people how God sees things, for the prophet sees things as God sees them. This directness of vision is not always popular, for we don't always like being told certain aspects of ourselves: hearing from someone else the truth about ourselves is often unwelcome, particularly when it involves criticism and demands change. Ezekiel was sent to the people of Israel, exiled in Babylon, to encourage them and tell them that, despite their disastrous losses, they should not give way to despair. The hope of Israel was in them (the people in exile), rather than in the remnant left in Jerusalem who were 'stubborn and obstinate' and refused to listen. We are prepared to listen to criticisms of others merrily enough and agree heartily, but are less happy to receive criticism. However, the word of God often comes to us in ways that we do not recognize, and that can include criticisms of ourselves, perhaps spoken in anger or only partly true, but no less valid criticisms for that.

Listen in prayer to what the Lord is asking of you. What is he calling you to change?

Second Reading: *Paul's Weakness and Strength*

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, "My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness." So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.

In this final part of the letter to the Corinthians Paul is defending his apostolate against a rival group of preachers whom he caricatures as 'super-apostles'. They claim to have authority greater than his. Paul replies by stating that he is more fully a servant of the Lord Jesus. Most of his argument forms an invaluable autobiographical sketch. Paul makes his case with three points. First he outlines the sufferings and persecutions he has undergone in the service of Christ: just as Jesus sees himself as the Suffering Servant of the Lord prophesied by Isaiah, so by his sufferings Paul sees himself as the servant of the Lord Jesus. Secondly, Paul speaks of his heavenly vision, the experience or revelation of 'words that may not and cannot be spoken by any human being', and this is the core inspiration of his life. Thirdly, in this passage Paul stresses his own weakness, which makes him rely on God's strength. What this weakness was, we do not know. Nor is its exact nature significant. The point is that it prevented Paul getting proud and made him rely on God's strength to counteract his own weakness.

What helps us to endure "hardships" in the service of Christ?

“Rely on God's strength.”

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