



Encountering Christ
Prayerfully preparing for the
Sunday Mass and praying in
particular for our school families



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 20th March 2022 - The Third Sunday in Lent

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 20th March 2022 - Time for Repentance (Luke 13:1-9)

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, "Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did." He told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, 'Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.'"



3 Reflect

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

We have seen how St Luke, in his gospel, places great emphasis on Jesus' message of repentance and forgiveness. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry Peter must admit his sinfulness before he is called to be an apostle; at the end, the good thief acknowledges his guilt and is welcomed into Jesus' kingdom. This gospel reading, with its historical examples and its parable, reinforces the Old Testament lesson of repentance. Notice also how, in Luke's account of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector, the latter wins through: his prayer is only 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner'. Every proclamation of the gospel in Luke's Acts of the Apostles ends with an appeal for repentance. Repentance means not simply bewailing our sins but doing something about it, changing our way of life, our scale of values. However, we are made in the image of God, and cannot expect God's forgiveness unless we too follow God's example and show the same forgiveness to others. The sinful woman who loved much was forgiven much (Luke 7:36-50). Nor is Luke the only evangelist to stress this point. Matthew adds at the end of the Lord's Prayer the saying of Jesus which underlines the importance of the single petition, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others'.

If you think of yourself as the fig-tree, what do you consider to be the most 'rotten' part of yourself that you really need to change? Would the sacrament of Reconciliation help? What sort of injury do you find it hardest to forgive - an affront to your pride, your pocket or your person? Is there anyone you have not forgiven?

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.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 20th March 2022



First Reading: *Moses at the Burning Bush*

Exodus 3:1-8. 13-15

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. "I must go and look at this strange sight," Moses said, "and see why the bush is not burnt." Now the Lord saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. "Moses, Moses!" he said. "Here I am," he answered. "Come no nearer," he said. "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father," he said, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God. And the Lord said, "I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow." Then Moses said to God, "I am to go, then, to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' But if they ask me what his name is, what am I to tell them?" And God said to Moses, "I Am who I Am. This," he added, "is what you must say to the sons of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name for all time; by this name I shall be invoked for all generations to come."

In our Lenten readings we have progressed through the story of God's people and now we come to the crucial point when God reveals his name to Moses. This is a decisive moment, because to give your name is a sign of trust and friendship. Someone who has your name has power over you in all kinds of ways, so you give your name only to those you trust. The Hebrew people, descendants of Abraham, are at a low point, a mere oppressed rabble of immigrants in Egypt, lacking land or security, marked out for extermination by a powerful bureaucratic state. It is as though God had waited for this moment to raise them up, to form them as a coherent group with a leader who could stand up for them in God's name. God does not yet give the meaning of the name; perhaps 'I Am who I Am' even means 'You mind your own business!' God's name does have something to do with Being, and the Greek translation of the Hebrew text understands it as 'Pure Being', 'the One who Is'. In the Hebrew Bible the meaning of the name is given later on at Sinai, after Israel's worship of the Golden Bull, when God passes before Moses crying out the name, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God of mercy and forgiveness'. This is the true significance of God's name which will echo in passage after passage later on in the Bible.

What does this understanding of God's name mean to you?

Second Reading: *The Rock which is Christ*

1 Corinthians 10:1-6. 10-12

I want to remind you, brothers, how our fathers were all guided by a cloud above them and how they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in this cloud and in this sea; all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, since they all drank from the spiritual rock that followed them as they went, and that rock was Christ. In spite of this, most of them failed to please God and their corpses littered the desert. These things all happened as warnings for us, not to have the wicked lusts for forbidden things that they had. You must never complain: some of them did, and they were killed by the Destroyer. All this happened to them as a warning and it was written down to be a lesson for us who are living at the end of the age. The man who thinks he is safe must be careful that he does not fall.

*As with the readings of the previous two Sundays, the second reading moves the first reading into a higher gear. God revealed his name to Moses in the desert, led the Israelites across the sea and cared for them in the desert with manna for food and water from the rock to drink. Paul uses the current rabbinic explanation of the two accounts (in the books of Exodus and Numbers) of Moses striking the rock for water: it is not two accounts of the same incident, but they are separate incidents. It is the same rock who accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the desert. How does a rock follow the people in their wanderings? Paul explains to us that the real meaning of the rock is Christ who nourishes us. However, Paul is really writing to chide the Corinthians on their undisciplined behaviour, especially when gathered at the Eucharist. Despite the wonders that accompanied the Israelites, the desert wanderings were a time of infidelity and rebellion which even the God of mercy and forgiveness was compelled to correct. Let the Corinthians learn their lesson! Even though their Christian life was marked by plentiful gifts of the Spirit, they must repent of their wild behaviour. **Is Christ the rock who is with you always - the one who gives you the waters of life?***

“The rock is Christ
who nourishes us.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
w: www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org