



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 24th July 2022 - The Seventeenth 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 24th July 2022 (Luke 11:1-13): The Lord's Prayer

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "Say this when you pray: 'Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test.'" He also said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, 'My friend, lend me three loaves because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him;' and the man answers from inside the house, 'Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you.' I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants. So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"



3 Reflect

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

Luke is the evangelist of prayer. Again and again he shows us Jesus praying. At all the important moments of his life Jesus needs this intimacy with his Father. So he is praying at the baptism; before the choice of the disciples he prays through the night; at the Transfiguration he is praying. Now the prayer which is so often used by Christians is one he gives us himself. Luke's rendering of the prayer he taught the disciples is slightly shorter than the version in Matthew. It begins with the simple call 'Father' (rather than 'Our Father in heaven') - a noble and affectionate way of speaking to God. 'Thy will be done' is omitted, for it is Matthew who often insists on doing the will of the Father. Instead of 'give us this day our daily bread' Luke presents the insistent 'give us each day', which stresses the continuity of our dependence on God. After this prayer follows a series of parables and images which underline the importance of persistence in prayer and continual prayer after the model of Jesus himself. Elsewhere Luke will give us other parables about prayer: the Unjust Judge (again teaching perseverance in prayer) and the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (teaching the importance of humility in prayer).

What do Jesus' words in the Gospel teach us about prayer? Have there been occasions when God has answered your prayers in a way you did not expect?

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 24th July 2022



First Reading: *Abraham Bargains with God*

Genesis 18:20-32

The Lord said, "How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know." The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Approaching him he said, "Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them; will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice?" The Lord replied, "If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them." Abraham replied, "I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes. But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy the whole city for five?" "No," he replied, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five just men there." Again Abraham said to him, "Perhaps there will only be forty there." "I will not do it," he replied, "for the sake of the forty." Abraham said, "I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: perhaps there will only be thirty there." "I will not do it," he replied, "if I find thirty there." He said, "I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there will only be twenty there." "I will not destroy it," he replied, "for the sake of the twenty." He said, "I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten." "I will not destroy it," he replied, "for the sake of the ten."

This delightful story continues the episode of last Sunday's first reading. It is reminiscent of a scene of bargaining in an oriental bazaar, a scene of deadly earnest, yet playful negotiation. Abraham goes on pushing his luck, using laughably inadequate logic, until he has gone well beyond the point of any sort of reason. His partner in this game continues to show good-humoured tolerance, and above all an unbelievable willingness to forgive. Some might find this haggling process lacking in reverence for the almighty power of God, but it is an expression of Israel's intimate affection for the LORD. This attitude towards God is expressed in the special Hebrew name for God, which is never pronounced. The LORD himself will later reveal to Moses the meaning of this intimate name of Israel's own God as 'God of mercy and forgiveness'. This sacred personal name of the LORD is never pronounced, partly out of respect (for the glory of the LORD is too awesome for that name to be on human lips), but partly also out of fondness, just as we do not noise around in public the intimate terms of affection which are used only within our close family circle.

What does this reading say to us about our relationship and conversation with God?

Second Reading: *Baptized into Christ*

Colossians 2:12-14

You have been buried with Christ, when you were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he has brought you to life with him; he has forgiven us all our sins. He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

In this striking passage from Colossians we are presented with the compelling force of Paul's powerful image about our sharing in Christ's death and resurrection. Our life is hidden with Christ in God; since we were baptised into Christ's death we are raised in his resurrection; we emerge with Christ from the tomb, sharing his life, co-heirs with him and calling God our Father. Paul sees the sin of Adam not as something which happened long, long ago, but as a metaphor for our own sin, because 'Adam' means 'man' or 'humanity'. This sin, every sin, is a sin of disobedience to God. Christ is, in Pauline thought, the Second Adam. By his obedience to his Father on the Cross he wiped away, dissolved or overrode the sin of disobedience of the first Adam, the sin of humanity. The sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is the complete expression of obedience to the Father, which restores our loving relationship with him. This is strongly expressed when Paul says that Christ nailed to the Cross the record of our debt to the Law. Circumcision was of no avail; it was only by being baptised into Christ's death and raised in his resurrection that we could be restored.

What does this passage teach us about our life in Christ?

“The sacrifice of Christ on the Cross... restores our loving relationship with the Father.”

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