



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 27th February 2022 - The Eighth 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

The Gospel for Sunday 27th February 2022 - Judging Others (Luke 6.39-45)

Jesus told a parable to his disciples. 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye. "There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit; people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out from what fills his heart.'



3 Reflect

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

Matthew gathered together the teaching of Jesus on the basic requirements of Christian morality into the Sermon on the Mount; that formed a sort of manifesto for the Kingdom of Heaven, starting with the eight Beatitudes. Luke gathers many of the same teachings into his 'Sermon on the Plain', starting with four Beatitudes. This has provided the gospel readings for the last three Sundays. Matthew, writing for Christians of Jewish origin, stressed Jesus' teaching on law, and how Jesus made it more interior and often more demanding. Luke, always aware of the needs of the poor, stresses more our social obligations. As he draws to a conclusion, he gives us two of Jesus' warnings, expressed in the vivid language and with the fierce exaggeration and wit that is so characteristic of Jesus' teachings. The first, the splinter and the log, warns us to use the same standards in judging ourselves as we use in judging others. The second, the sound and rotten fruit, is perhaps a double warning. You can judge people only by their actions. More profoundly, it is also a challenge: don't flatter yourself on your achievements until you are good through and through, until the store of goodness in your heart is really overflowing.

Is it ever helpful to point out people's faults?

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 27th February 2022



First Reading: *The Test of Speech*

Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7

In a shaken sieve the rubbish is left behind, so too the defects of a man appear in his talk. The kiln tests the work of the potter, the test of a man is in his conversation. The orchard where the trees grow is judged on the quality of its fruit, similarly a man's words betray what he feels. Do not praise a man before he has spoken, since this is the test of men.

The wise sage of Jerusalem collected many proverbs and pithy sayings. Most of them are severely practical, as in this short reading. Here he presents us with four images of testing someone by their speech. He does not deny that there are other ways of proving a person's worth and generosity, but these four aspects of testing by speech are as clear as any. This reading is chosen to introduce the sayings of the gospel reading on discerning people by their fruits. There is no way of telling what people are, except by how they act.

In fact, the Book of Sirach is rather a favourite with Luke. He takes at least two of his sayings and transforms them into parables to illustrate two of his special emphases in Jesus' teaching. Luke is the evangelist of prayer, and a saying on a widow's earnest prayers (Sirach 35.14) illustrates the need to persevere in prayer in Luke 18.1-8 (the Parable of the Unjust Judge), and the Rich Fool (Sirach 11.19) is used to illustrate the acute dangers of hoarding wealth in Luke 12.16-21.

Which is the most testing of the criteria in this reading?

Second Reading: *Christ's Victory over Death*

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

“ For Paul, death is a triumph which he awaits eagerly, longing to be fully united with Christ ”

For most people, death is terror: the one thing certain about life is that it will end in death. For Paul, death is a triumph which he awaits eagerly, longing to be fully united with Christ and to share fully in Christ's victory. This Christian attitude, totally at variance with the views of those who do not know Christ, and with our natural human instincts, is the reason why the Church has given the last four Sundays to meditation on the transformation that will take place at Christian death. Paul is so convinced of the overwhelming power of Christ and his victory over sin that there is no hesitation: this mortal body will put on immortality. Quite how this will be is still not entirely clear: Paul says it is foolish even to ask what sort of body the dead will have. But he insists that there is continuity: the seed that dies is transformed, but 'each kind of seed has its own kind of body'; the risen person is in continuity with the person in this life. There are no conditions attached, no threat or fear of hell, being cast into outer darkness 'where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth', as in so many of Matthew's parables.

Why does Paul never mention the word 'hell' or consider it?

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