



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 9th July 2023 - The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

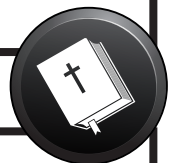
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this 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 9th July 2023 - Father and Son (Matthew 11:25-30)

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'



3 Reflect

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

This much-loved and encouraging passage tells of the intimacy of the relationship between Father and Son in a way that no other passage of the synoptic gospels does. It is reminiscent of those passages in John 5 which unfold the equality of Father and Son: the Son does nothing but what he sees the Father doing; the Father loves the Son so that he entrusts all things to the Son; and the Son gives life just as the Father gives life. Then we read about the gentle invitation of the Son to all who are overburdened. The 'yoke' is often a symbol of the Law of Moses, which could seem burdensome with its many commands, though it was also valued as God's revelation of himself to his own people in love. Christ is not a tyrannical master, but is a sympathetic, gentle and humble leader who shares his life with his followers. The 'yoke' or law of Christ is the interior impulse of the Spirit which we read more about in today's second reading. It cannot be burdensome, since it is a joy to carry this 'yoke'; it is a way of living with Christ and by his Spirit. Martyrs are subjected to physical pains, yet for them joy is a constant feature in the accounts of their martyrdom.

Do you ever feel you can't cope? Do you ask Jesus for help? What does Jesus mean by his 'yoke'? Do you find it comfortable?

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 9th July 2023



First Reading: *The King on a Donkey*

Zechariah 9:9-10

The Lord says this: 'Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion! Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem! See now, your king comes to you; he is victorious, he is triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will banish chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem; the bow of war will be banished. He will proclaim peace for the nations. His empire shall stretch from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.'

The link between this reading and today's Gospel reading is not immediately obvious, at least in our English translation. The use of a donkey as a mount is a sign that the king will be humble, just as Jesus in the Gospel says that he is humble of heart. This connection is made clear when Jesus makes his messianic entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday mounted 'on a colt, the foal of a donkey'. In the spirituality of the people of Israel during those centuries after the Babylonian exile and leading up to the coming of Christ, this quality of humility, rejection of all pomp and pride of position, was very central. Israel could claim no success because of her own distinctiveness, but was forced to rely on the Lord. The poor and humble were the chosen ones of the Lord. Especially in the Lukan stories of Jesus' infancy it is made clear that the blessing of God comes to the poor and humble. Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist) and Mary are both poor and disadvantaged. Mary can find no decent place to give birth to her son. Jesus is greeted by impoverished, hireling shepherds. Joseph can afford only the turtledove, an offering of the poor. Simeon and Anna have the disadvantage of advanced old age.

Humility often gets a bad press in our society. What does it mean to be humble as Christ was humble?

Second Reading: *The Spirit is Alive in You*

Romans 8:9.11-13

Your interests are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him, and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you. So then, my brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live.

Chapter eight of Romans, from which readings for the next three Sundays are chosen, is the chapter of the Spirit. We have seen that the Christian, baptised into Christ, lives with his life, the life of the Spirit of Christ. This means that the Christian's whole value-system is that of the Spirit, the reverse of the values of the 'flesh'. 'Flesh' in Paul does not mean, as it often does in modern parlance, only the grosser, 'carnal' desires such as gluttony, drunkenness and irresponsible sex. In the Letter to the Galatians 5:18-21 (and in many ways Galatians is a preliminary to Romans) the 'works of the flesh' include such non-physical things as sorcery, rivalry, quarrels, malice. The concept of 'flesh' therefore centres on unchecked or un-schooled natural desires, on self-indulgence as opposed to self-control. To live by the law of the Spirit is therefore not to live by the Law of Moses, which merely checks external actions, nor to live by the law of the flesh, but is to live by the Spirit of Christ, from which love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, trustfulness, gentleness and the other Christ-like motivations well up spontaneously. In this sense the Law of Christ does not restrain from without but impels from within.

Can the interior impulse really replace an external law?

“ The Christian, baptised into Christ, lives with his life, the life of the Spirit of Christ. ”

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