



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15th January 2023 - The Second 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 15th January 2023 - The Lamb of God (John 1:29-34)

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said, "A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me.

I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.'" John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

3 Reflect

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

In contrast to the other gospels, where the reader observes the disciples discovering gradually who Jesus is, John gives us a week between the baptism and the marriage-feast of Cana, during which Jesus is given increasingly significant titles by those who meet him: Rabbi, the Messiah, Son of God, King of Israel. Perhaps the most significant titles of all are those given by the Baptist himself, Lamb of God and Chosen One of God. Jesus as the Lamb of God is a theme which overarches the gospel; it is introduced again at the Crucifixion. According to John Jesus dies at the moment the paschal lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple, and John alone refers the scriptural saying to Jesus that 'Not one bone of his will be broken' (John 19:36) which was originally part of the instructions for the sacrificing of the lamb at the Festival of Passover (Exodus 12:46). In the Book of Revelation Jesus is represented standing 'as a Lamb that seemed to have been sacrificed'. The Lamb is therefore an image both of his suffering and of his triumph. It links up with the picture of Jesus as the Suffering Servant of the Lord who moves through suffering and humiliation to vindication and to the triumph of God.

Reflection: Reflect on Jesus as the Lamb standing as though sacrificed.

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 15th January 2023



First Reading: *Israel, Servant of the Lord*

Isaiah 49:3. 5-6

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified'; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord; my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'

We are about to set out, in the Ordinary Sundays of Year A, on a journey through Matthew's account of Jesus' ministry. In the gospels themselves of Mark, Matthew and Luke, the reader accompanies the disciples in learning only gradually who and what Jesus is. In the arrangement of the Lectionary, however, which is put before us by the Church, the gospel-reading of this first Sunday this year is from John, showing clearly who Jesus is: 'the Chosen One of God'. The first reading from Isaiah, written in the dark days of the Babylonian Exile, introduces a Servant of the Lord, formed in the womb to be the Lord's Servant and to bring light both to Israel and to the nations. Is this an individual whose mission is to bring Israel back to the Lord, or is it the nation of Israel, destined to bring the gentile nations to the Lord? Despite their failure to recognise the Messiah, the faithful of Israel still bear witness 'to the ends of the earth' to God's promises. It is remarkable that, already at this stage of revelation, the task given by God to the one who truly serves him is to bring the whole world within the orbit of the salvation promised to Israel.

What does it mean to you to describe Jesus as "servant"? How do I follow Christ, the Servant of the Lord?

Second Reading: *The Beginning of First Corinthians*

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

“The holy people of God.”

One third of this great letter to the Corinthians is read at the beginning of each of the three years of our Sunday cycle of readings. Paul greets the Corinthians as the 'holy people of God', but – like the pilgrim Church today – they were far from uniformly holy. However, they were chosen to be holy and so, by that same divine choice, given the designation 'holy'. Corinth was a turbulent city. It had been sacked by the Romans for rebellion. But it lay on the narrow neck of land between the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, and so was a vital resource for shipping between the eastern and western Mediterranean. After a hundred years it was rebuilt, and a hundred years after that, when Paul was writing, it was again a boom town, with two harbours, an international games more famous than the Olympics and a large segment of the population was Jewish. Paul spent eighteen months evangelizing the city before being driven out by the Jews. However, he kept in close contact with the Church there and wrote them several letters. It was not an easy relationship: the Corinthians were arrogant and quarrelsome. Paul does not hesitate to correct them. He calls them babies whom he can feed only on milk - which must have upset the city elders among them!

At the opening of the letter, St Paul reminds us that we are called to be saints (not babies). How may we grow in holiness and become a community of saints?

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