



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - 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 Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - Treasures New and Old (Matthew 13:44-52)**

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just, to throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'



**3** Reflect

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

*St Matthew presents us this week with three final pictures from his collection of Jesus' images about the Christian community. Matthew likes pairs of parables: the dragnet pairs with last week's darnel-parable, the treasure pairs with the pearl. The Kingdom is an exciting and unexpected treasure which can change our whole life; it's like winning the pools or the lottery – except that God's gifts change us only for the good, and fill our lives with meaning and joy. Of course we know that God's call is demanding: you've got to pay a price for the field in which the treasure lies, or for the genuine pearl found in a junk-shop! The very last picture - the householder bringing down different food-packets, pots and jars off the shelf - is encouraging too: some are old favourites (perhaps like the Christian values and prayers which we inherited from our families), but some add new flavours too, which we have discovered or been taught ourselves. If we listen, the Spirit is always there to show us new ways of living out our Christian calling, revealing to us an opportunity for prayer or help or service. This 'householder' is often thought to be Matthew's secret signature for himself: he brings out old and new in the Christian message.*

**How can we learn new ways of living out our Christian calling?**

**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 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023



## First Reading: Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

### Kings 3:5.7-12

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this,' the Lord said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

*How many of our modern politicians and monarchs would do well to imitate this prayer of Solomon as he comes to the throne! He is touchingly conscious of his own inadequacies and inexperience. He does not ask for anything for his own advantage, but just for the skills he needs to rule his people well. In reply the Lord promises him plenty of material rewards. Immediately afterwards, as illustration of the wisdom which is given to him, we have the famous story of 'The Judgment of Solomon', how he settled the dispute between two prostitutes, each claiming as her own the live baby of two, the other of whom had died. Solomon's wisdom became so renowned that several collections of witty and pungent proverbs in the Bible are attributed to him. The Lord made him a canny businessman too, for he built up a fortune as middleman, selling horses from Asia Minor to Egypt, and chariots to go with them from Egypt to Asia Minor, as well as mining the minerals of the land. No wonder the Queen of Sheba was bowled over! The reading is given here perhaps to pair with the gospel picture of the disciple who in the parables brings out wisdom new and old.*

*How may you live wisely? How do you make good choices?*

## Second Reading: The True Image of the Son

### Romans 8:28-30

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

*It is time for Paul to start summing up the benefits of the Spirit which he has detailed in this eighth chapter of Romans. In his excitement he switches to high rhetoric, using a triple chain-figure which he uses also elsewhere in his exalted conclusions: 'destined – called, called – justified, justified – glorified'. The content about which he is justifiably so excited is that God's chosen ones are moulded to the image, shape or pattern of his Son; they are not merely co-heirs but conformed to him. To underline this assimilation to Christ, Paul uses every metaphor he can find: con-crucified with Christ, con-buried with him, con-risen with him, congruent with him. Living with Christ's life, moulded to the pattern of Christ, the Christian takes on Christ's history as his or her own. Here St Paul emphasises the personal aspect of being plunged into Christ's death at Baptism. The community aspect will be explored in the letters to the quarrelsome community at Corinth: as all Christians live with Christ's life, Christians form one single body, vivified by the same life-giving Spirit, and therefore must help and serve one another as members of the same body, each contributing a different gift for the well-being of the whole.*

*What does it mean to you to be conformed to Christ?*

“The Christian takes on Christ's history as his or her own.”

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

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