

Encountering Christ

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families

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.

1 Read

The Gospel for Sunday 14th January 2024
THE FIRST DISCIPLES

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, "Look, there is the lamb of God." Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, "What do you want?" They answered, "Rabbi," - which means Teacher - "where do you live?" "Come and see," he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour. One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" - which means the Christ - and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, "You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas" - meaning Rock.

Taken from John 1:35-42 The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

2 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering the Gospel, continue by reading this reflection

This year the ordinary Sunday gospel readings are taken from Mark, and this provides us with a full picture of that gospel. But Mark is the shortest of the gospels, and is not quite long enough, so just occasionally a reading from John slips in to enrich our understanding of the meaning of Jesus' words and actions. Today's story is about the call of the first disciples and takes place in the Jordan valley, where John was baptising. The first two to be called are disciples of John, so they had already joined his group who were waiting for the Messiah. They were ready when John pointed him out. It is striking that Jesus first calls them to be with him, and that they remain with him for a time. In our call to follow Christ, first comes prayer and getting to know him, before we can actively work for Christ and bring others to share his joy. Only after this repose with the Lord do the disciples sprint off in their enthusiasm and bring others to join in the benefits they have received from that tranquillity and refreshment which comes from keeping company with Jesus.

Do I spend enough time simply being with Jesus? What is God calling you to do?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

THE **WORD**
PARISH VERSION



3 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. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy or something else.

4 Remember

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and particularly for families connected to your parish school.

You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as: St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 14th January 2024



1st Reading: *1 Samuel 3:3-10. 19*

The Call of Samuel

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He answered, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." Eli said, "I did not call. Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." He replied, "I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down." Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.



In the readings of Sundays 'in Ordinary Time' the first reading normally links with the gospel reading, and this is a superb example of such a link: the call of Samuel and his response prepare for the call of the first disciples of Jesus. The call of the young boy Samuel into the Lord's service is always a favourite story. It is easy to imagine the boy lying, dozing on his mat in the half-darkness, hearing the voice murmur 'Shmuel' (the Hebrew form of his name). Was it really a call, was it the old prophet calling, or was it just the wind in the pillars of the Temple? Samuel has all the directness, willingness and simplicity of a child, the sort of qualities needed for the Kingdom of God. Similarly, we too may find it hard to know whether an 'inspiration' is really the call of God or our own imagination. Prayer and advice help in discerning the genuine call from a madcap scheme! Others may know us better than we know ourselves, and God's call is always fitted to our true nature.

How can you discern the genuine call of God?



2nd Reading: *1 Corinthians 6:13-15. 17-20*

The Body Belongs to Christ

The body is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too. You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.



This is the first of six consecutive Sunday readings from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. The Christian community at Corinth was a troublesome lot, and seems to have lacked any resident human guide. They relied on the Holy Spirit, backed up by several letters from Paul. Here we have Paul's most forceful argument for sexual self-control: as Christ lives in us by his Spirit, all our bodily members are Christ's, and Christ is involved in every movement of them. This should give us a wonderful reverence for our bodies, knowing that we involve Christ in all our body's activities. The most powerful expression of this comes in verse 16 (omitted in the public reading, perhaps as being too pointed): "anyone who attaches himself to a prostitute is one body with her, since the two become one flesh". This drives the lesson home: Christ, too, becomes involved with the prostitute. Christ is involved in a wonderful way in the sexual act of procreation, giving a couple the inestimable privilege and joy of sharing in God's work of creation. But Christ is also abused by a Christian's abuse of sex.

In what ways can we show right reverence for our body, the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

“ This should give us a wonderful reverence for our bodies. ”

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

**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**