



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 10th February 2013 - The Fifth 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 10th February 2013 (Luke 5:1-11): The Call of the First Disciples

Jesus was standing one day by the lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats - it was Simon's - and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch." "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets." And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boats to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point. When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, "Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man." For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch." Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

3 Reflect

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

There were obviously several different versions of the call of the first disciples circulating in the early Church. In the gospels of Mark and Matthew, Jesus is passing along the shore of the lake when he calls two pairs of disciples. In John it takes place where John the Baptist was preaching. The story in Luke has many similarities to the story at the end of John's gospel after the Resurrection, when the risen Christ commissions Peter: a night of failed fishing is followed by a huge catch as a consequence of obedience to Jesus' instructions, and so the Church has always seen this event as signifying the need for obedience to Christ. Luke's version combines the same play on words as in Mark and Matthew about fishing for people, but Luke sets the story a little later. In Mark the fishermen have never seen Jesus and follow him blindly; in Luke Peter and his friends have already got to know Jesus before they are commissioned. A special feature in Luke is Peter's cry that he is an unworthy sinner. Luke often teaches us that no one can be a disciple of Jesus without first admitting their sinfulness: Zacchaeus the tax-collector (Luke 19:1-10), and the woman who wept at Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36-50) are other examples.

What is significant about the Lord's call of his disciples according to Luke's account?

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 10th February 2013



First Reading: *The Holy One of Israel*

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings. And they cried out one to another in this way, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. His glory fills the whole earth." The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, and the Temple was filled with smoke. I said, "What a wretched state I am in! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have looked at the King, the Lord of hosts." Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this he touched my mouth and said, "See now, this has touched your lips; your sin is taken away, your iniquity is purged." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?" I answered, "Here I am; send me."

This passage recounts the first calling of the prophet Isaiah. For Isaiah God is primarily the Holy One of Israel. This vision of the Triple-Holy, seated on the throne of glory in the Temple, does all that is possible to convey in words the daunting otherness of the One whose glory fills the whole earth. The human reaction to this manifestation of God is acute awareness of uncleanness. Isaiah can only shrink away from God until his uncleanness has been purged by the burning fire of God's love upon his lips. No human being can see God and live. The glory seen by Isaiah (and by Moses on Mount Sinai) is only the outer fringe of the fullness of God's glory, but it leaves the human visionary stunned and aghast at the contrast between the divine holiness and human unworthiness. Throughout the Book that bears his name Isaiah will revert again and again to the awesome holiness of the Lord. God is our loving Father, but there can be no neglecting the distinction which lies between Creator and created. At the same time we are both attracted and daunted by the living God.

What does it mean to describe God as "holy"? What does it mean when we describe a disciple of Christ as "holy"?

Second Reading: *The Earliest Gospel*

1 Corinthians 15:3-8. 11

In the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself, namely that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared first to Cephas and secondly to the Twelve. Next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died; then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles; and last of all he appeared to me too; it was as though I was born when no one expected it. But what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed.

“It is the primary task to witness to the resurrection of Christ, not merely by our words, but by the way we behave.”

The most precious element of this reading is the proclamation of the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection, which the earliest Christians already saw as fulfilling the Scriptures. We can tell that by Paul's time this recital of the Good News was already traditional. Firstly, Paul here uses the terms which were used by the rabbis for the handing on of tradition, 'I taught you what I had been taught myself'. Secondly, the language is not quite Paul's own; for instance: for scriptural fulfilment Paul always writes 'as it is written', whereas here we twice have 'in accordance with the scriptures', which Paul himself never says. To witness to the resurrection of Christ, was the primary task of the apostles. For us, too, it is the primary task: not merely by our words, but by the way we behave, we need to live in the awareness that Christ's resurrection (after his endurance of humiliation and dreadful suffering) is the basic fact of life. The central factor in Christian faith and witness is not the empty tomb but the experience of the apostles in meeting the Risen Christ. This is what unbelievably transformed them from being a defeated and hopeless rabble, huddled in hiding, into courageous and enterprising witnesses.

What lies at the heart of our tradition which we hand on to others?

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