



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 - The Twenty 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 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 (Luke 14:1. 7-14): Invitations

On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, 'Give up your place to this man.' And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, 'My friend, move up higher.' In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted." Then he said to his host, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again."



## 3 Reflect

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

*Two parables in today's Gospel about invitations to table. Both are from Luke's special material, without parallel in the other gospels. Jesus moves in a higher stratum of society than he does in Mark and Matthew, and often has in mind the implications of the Gospel in this context. The first parable, however, like several of Luke's parables, seems to be developed from a little Old Testament proverb: 'Do not give yourself airs, do not take a place among the great; better to be invited, "Come up here," than to be humiliated' (Proverbs 25:6-7). At first sight this seems a merely worldly precaution, a false humility engineered to gain attention. But for Luke a banquet is always an image of the heavenly banquet of the Lord. So the message is a moral one too: don't think yourself better than you are. The message is also typical of Luke's open and straightforward approach. One is reminded of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-collector at prayer, where the latter prays only 'God be merciful to me, a sinner'. The second parable also is typical of Luke: it exemplifies his stress on the inherent danger of wealth, on the need to use wealth well, and on his concern for the poor and neglected in society.*

**What is the message of these two parables? What does their message say to me about the way I lead my own life?**

**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 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019

## First Reading: *Humility*

### **Ecclesiasticus 3:17-20. 28-29**

My son, be gentle in carrying out your business, and you will be better loved than a lavish giver. The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly, and then you will find favour with the Lord; for great though the power of the Lord is, he accepts the homage of the humble. There is no cure for the proud man's malady, since an evil growth has taken root in him. The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables; an attentive ear is the sage's dream.

*Readings from this book of Ben Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) come only half a dozen times on the Sundays of the three-year cycle. It is probably the oldest of the Greek books of the Bible, written in Hebrew by an experienced scribe at Jerusalem a couple of centuries before Christ. The version we have was translated into Greek for the Jews of Alexandria by the grandson of the author. The book is full of worldly as well as divine wisdom, and demonstrates a real appreciation of human nature; there is often a streak of dry wit as well. Here the author reminds us that pride is often a cover-up for insecurity. The truly great person has no need to create an impression, but can afford to be open and appreciative and ready to learn from others; such openness is attractive. Moreover, openness produces a solidity and authenticity which allows us to hear the quiet word of the Lord: 'To the humble the Lord reveals his secrets'. This is the quality of Jesus who is 'meek and humble of heart', who rides as king into Jerusalem not on a prancing warhorse but on a donkey.*

***Do I ever really convince other people (or even myself) by showing off?***

## Second Reading: *The City of the Living God*

### **Hebrews 12:18-19. 22-24**

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them. But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant.

*This final reading from the Letter of the Hebrews brings together the two main themes of the Letter, the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to that of the Old Law, and the theme of pilgrimage, concentrating here on its goal. Just like the Israelites in the desert of the Exodus, the Church is still a pilgrim Church, wending its way unsteadily towards its final goal. In soothing the nostalgia of the Hebrew priests who still yearned for the old rites of the Temple, the author compares the two pilgrimages of the Old and New Testament, and points to the superiority of the goal of New Testament pilgrimage. The pilgrimage of the Old Law was to Sinai and to the unbearably awesome experience of God on the mountain. The goal of the Christian pilgrimage is the heavenly Jerusalem, where all is peace and perfection. There is the contrast also of the two covenants, the one made on Sinai, destined to be broken repeatedly throughout the history of the Chosen People, and the eternal new covenant mediated by the priesthood of Christ, destined to remain for ever as the secure basis of our adoptive sonship and inheritance.*

***What does it mean to speak of the "pilgrim" Church?***

“The goal of the Christian pilgrimage is the heavenly Jerusalem, where all is peace and perfection.”

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