



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 9th May 2021 - The Sixth Sunday of Easter

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 9th May 2021 (John 15:9-17): Loving like God

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants anymore, because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me; no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. What I command you is to love one another."



3 Reflect

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

Like so many of the great discourses of Jesus in the gospel of John, today's reading is not a shorthand record of Jesus' words, but will have been written up after the event. Most probably there were several slightly different versions of what Jesus said at the Last Supper. In any case, one can see that the author has in mind two different contexts: Jesus' own historical situation at the Last Supper and the situation of the early Church, where the disciples are being tested hard in their mission. They need encouraging by Jesus' own example of his sacrifice and by his promise of real friendship; they are friends, not servants, specially chosen by Jesus to bear fruit that will last. So we too are welcomed as friends, chosen and commissioned by Jesus to go out and bear fruit, but reminded that we must be prepared to pay the price. There is no fruit without pruning. Jesus had just given the example of service by washing the feet of his disciples. If we are to share the joy of Jesus we must be ready to join him also in laying down our lives for our friends.

Do we ever have to make hard choices for Christ?

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.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 9th May 2021



First Reading: *The Conversion of Cornelius*

Acts 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48

As Peter reached the house Cornelius went out to meet him, knelt at his feet and prostrated himself. But Peter helped him up. "Stand up," he said. "I am only a man after all!" Then Peter addressed them: "The truth I have now come to realise," he said, "is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him." While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, "Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?" He then gave orders for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days.

Jesus was the Messiah of Judaism, bringing to completion the promises made to Abraham. It came as a surprise to the first Christians that the salvation brought by Jesus was meant not just for Jews alone but for all the peoples of the earth. This is the scene where it happens. Peter has been prepared for it by a vision which annulled the Jewish food-laws. Then he was summoned to bring the gentile Cornelius to the faith. Now, even while he is speaking to Cornelius and his household, the Spirit takes matters (so to speak) into his own hands and comes down upon Cornelius. This is Pentecost for the gentiles. Today we may be tempted to think of our own group as the chosen ones, neglecting the breadth of God's love and desire that all people should turn to him and be saved. We can read again and again that Jesus actually went out of his way to welcome lepers, prostitutes, tax-collectors, and we still find it hard to believe that to God they are not 'undesirables'. It is all too easy for us to stay snugly wrapped up in our own neat cocoons. Remember: God has no favourites.

How far does the message of Christ extend beyond Christianity?

Second Reading: *Christian Love*

1 John 4:7-10

My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

“God is love itself.”

When John was writing, the Jews regarded gentiles as 'dogs'. This did not mean beloved pets, for dogs in John's world were either frightening guard-dogs or filthy scavengers. The first reading showed us God actually taking gentiles to himself by sending the Spirit upon them. The second reading now meditates on the nature of that love. The old saying, 'I love him but I can't stand the sight of him,' will not do if God is love itself and love itself is the nature of God. If God is not only the source of love and of life, but simply is love itself, even the distant 'wishing somebody well' from my heart is not enough. Would any of us be satisfied and comfortable with the idea that God doesn't actually like me but wishes me well in a distant sort of way? Love generates affection, respect, trust, a desire to come closer to the other. It is comforting to know that I am a son of God and can call God 'Abba', 'Father', but the consequence of this knowledge is more daunting: you too – whoever you are, whatever faults I see in you – are also the closest member of my family.

Do the faults of your family impede or enhance your love?

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