



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 10th November 2019 - The Thirty 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 10th November 2019 (Luke 20:27-38): The Sadducees' Riddle

Some Sadducees - those who say that there is no resurrection - approached Jesus and they put this question to him, "Master, we have it from Moses in writing, that if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. Well, then, there were seven brothers. The first, having married a wife, died childless. The second and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children. Finally the woman herself died. Now, at the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife since she had been married to all seven?" Jesus replied, "The children of this world take wives and husbands, but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection they are sons of God. And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all men are in fact alive."

3 Reflect

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

Since they did not believe in the resurrection or any sort of life after death, the Sadducees are trying to make fun of Jesus. By the Levirate Law of Judaism, if I marry and die without begetting a son, my nearest male relative is bound to marry my widow and raise up a son in my name to carry on my line. The Sadducees' neat mockery is to ask what happens if this is repeated seven times (and worse than that, for the perfect number 'seven' means 'ad infinitum'). Jesus, again with typical neatness, turns their argument back upon them by returning to that key text of scripture when God replies to Moses at the Burning Bush. Not only is this reply in the present tense, 'I am (still) the God of patriarchs long dead', but it is the fundamental text which guarantees God's rescue and protection of, and his presence with, his people through thick and thin. This is one more instance of Jesus' deep knowledge and mastery of scripture, of the way that he can transcend the flippant and superficial arguments of his opponents and make plain the deep and true sense of these holy texts. To God no one is 'dead and gone'; we all remain safe in his hands.

What does it mean to you to be a 'child' of the resurrection?

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 10th November 2019



First Reading: *Rising to New Life*

2 Maccabees 7:1-2. 9-14

There were seven brothers who were arrested with their mother. The king tried to force them to taste pig's flesh, which the Law forbids, by torturing them with whips and scourges. One of them, acting as spokesman for the others, said, "What are you trying to find out from us? We are prepared to die rather than break the Law of our ancestors." With his last breath the second brother exclaimed, "Inhuman fiend, you may discharge us from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, since it is for his laws that we die, to live again for ever." After him, they amused themselves with the third, who on being asked for his tongue promptly thrust it out and boldly held out his hands, with these honourable words, "It was heaven that gave me these limbs; for the sake of his laws I disdain them; from him I hope to receive them again." The king and his attendants were astounded at the young man's courage and his utter indifference to suffering. When this one was dead they subjected the fourth to the same savage torture. When he neared his end he cried, "Ours is the better choice, to meet death at men's hands, yet relying on God's promise that we shall be raised up by him; whereas for you there can be no resurrection, no new life."

This is the only reading from the Books of Maccabees in the Sunday cycle of readings. In the year 167 BC the Syrian Empire dominated Palestine, and King Antiochus IV decided to make an important step towards unifying his empire by wiping out the singular worship and religious customs of the Jews. He met stronger resistance than expected, and a great persecution was necessary. The resistance was led by three brothers who were given the name 'Maccabee' or 'Hammer'; they give their name to these two biblical books (and also to an excellent beer in Israel). Our reading narrates one incident from that persecution. The lasting importance of such a heroic stance by the brothers was the development of the doctrine of resurrection to new life. Until that time a popular opinion among the Israelites was that the dead were confined to Sheol, to a wretched half-life, where the dead had no strength and could not even praise God. This reading shows us that they had now begun to recognise that God would raise up to new life those who had died for their faith in persecution. By the time of Jesus this belief in the resurrection of the dead to new life was standard in Israel. Only the traditionalist Sadducees did not accept it.

How different would your life be if Jesus had not risen and extended to us the hope of resurrection?

Second Reading: *The Lord is Faithful*

2 Thessalonians 2:16 - 3:5

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who has given us his love and, through his grace, such inexhaustible comfort and such sure hope, comfort you and strengthen you in everything good that you do or say. Finally, brothers, pray for us; pray that the Lord's message may spread quickly, and be received with honour as it was among you; and pray that we may be preserved from the interference of bigoted and evil people, for faith is not given to everyone. But the Lord is faithful, and he will give you strength and guard you from the evil one, and we, in the Lord, have every confidence that you are doing and will go on doing all that we tell you. May the Lord turn your hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ.

A reading from Thessalonians heralds the end of the liturgical year (Year A ends with readings from 1 Thessalonians and Year C with this second letter). Both letters are concerned with the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. The little community at Thessalonika was worried. Paul had taught them that Christ had conquered death: for those baptised into Christ, death was no more. But then Christians had died! So Paul wrote to them that Christ would soon come in a triumphal procession, bringing with him his followers who had already died. This must have thrown the Thessalonians into a frenzy of excitement at such an imminent Coming of the Lord, for Paul writes to them this second letter to calm them down, explaining that the Coming is not so utterly imminent. They must continue to live life in the world, for there must first be a period in which evil is still at work, a period in which the Word of the Lord is still spreading, as it is among them, and in which they need protection from evil (or the Evil One). The Christian cannot opt out of the world, and so needs the strength of the Lord to live the ways of the Lord in a world which fundamentally fails to recognise such ways.

Reflecting on St Paul's teaching to the Thessalonians, what is our calling as Christians in today's world?

“The Christian cannot opt out of the world.”

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