



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 20th October 2019 - The Twenty Ninth 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 20th October 2019 (Luke 18:1-8): The Answer to Prayer

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. "There was a judge in a certain town," he said, "who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, 'I want justice from you against my enemy!' For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, 'Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death.'" And the Lord said, "You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"



3 Reflect

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

We often think of prayer as mere asking, and this parable encourages us to pester God as the wronged widow pestered the Unjust Judge. But that is only one aspect of Luke's teaching on prayer. He also shows us what our attitude in prayer should be in the parable which immediately follows today's passage from the gospel: the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector. The tax-collector wins approval because he just stands there, admitting his sins. Most instructive, however, is Luke's teaching on Jesus at prayer: he reminds us that Jesus is always quietly at prayer to his Father. He needs to slip away to spend the night in prayer. Especially he prays at the most important moments of his life: at his Baptism, when he chooses his team of disciples, before he teaches them to pray, at the approach of his Passion, finally forgiving and comforting others at his death. Paul tells us we should pray continually. The prayer of asking must be built on a relationship of love and dependence, just as the request of child to parents is built on their loving relationship. It does not matter if the child is at times naughty; the deep relationship between parent and child is one of love. So too we do not need to be perfect to make our requests to our Father.

When and how do you find it best to pray?

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 20th October 2019

First Reading: *Perseverance in Prayer*

Exodus 17:8-13

The Amalekites came and attacked Israel at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Pick out men for yourself, and tomorrow morning march out to engage Amalek. I, meanwhile, will stand on the hilltop, the staff of God in my hand." Joshua did as Moses told him and marched out to engage Amalek, while Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel had the advantage; when he let his arms fall, the advantage went to Amalek. But Moses' arms grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him and on this he sat, Aaron and Hur supporting his arms, one on one side, one on the other; and his arms remained firm till sunset. With the edge of the sword Joshua cut down Amalek and his people.

The battle scene in this passage seems to us nowadays a bit of odd to choose to reinforce the gospel lesson of perseverance in prayer. Can we still pray for the slaughter of our enemies? An important lesson of these bloodthirsty passages of the Old Testament is to remind us that revelation is gradual: we cannot take in everything at once. Look how long it took us to realise that the logical consequence of Paul's little letter to Philemon is the total abolition of slavery! Paul didn't realise it, and nor did most Christians for 1,700 years. Future generations may think our morality primitive too, as we or our successors come to understand Christ ever more fully. Moreover, although prayer can be exciting and uplifting, this reading reminds us that it can also be boring and wearying: we too may experience that sinking feeling of exhaustion, 'I can't hold my hands up any longer'. That is when we really need to get on and hang on in there, thus expressing our belief that God is not just one Mr Fix-it among many others, but he is our only hope, the one on whom we can always depend. Cupboard-love alone will not do, nor a last-minute turn to someone about whose existence we had practically forgotten.

When is it important to turn to prayer?

Second Reading: *The Uses of Scripture*

2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:2

You must keep to what you have been taught and know to be true; remember who your teachers were, and how, ever since you were a child, you have known the holy scriptures - from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work. Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of his Appearing and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience - but do all with patience and with the intention of teaching.

The inspired writer of the letter seems to be devoting much of his space to the use of scripture in preaching and in discussion and argument with others, but most of all he stresses that the scriptures instruct us for salvation. We have to receive the message and take it into our own hearts before we can pass it on to others. This we do by recognising the multiplicity of ways in which the scriptures shows us that God cares for us, revealing his ever-present forgiveness even in all those times when we mistrust him and shy away from him and search for happiness by ourselves. Only by immersing ourselves regularly in the scriptures and by growing to love the varied glimpses of God contained within them can we then come to appreciate the richness and fascination of these writings. But there are also plenty of difficulties to be overcome when reading them: the strangeness of language and ancient ways of thought, the sometimes barbaric primitiveness of the God's Chosen People, the seemingly tedious instructions on sacrifice and purity. Don't rush your reading. Go at your own pace, and remember that it began as God's Word to Abraham, Moses, David and many others, or with Jesus helping his contemporaries to understand what God's Kingdom is all about, or with Paul responding to the queries of his half-instructed converts. But now it is God's Word to you.

What is your favourite passage of scripture, and why?

“ We receive the message, and take it into our own hearts. ”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
w: www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org