



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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 2nd July 2023 - The Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

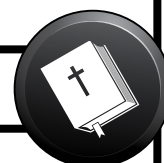
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this 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 Sunday 2nd July 2023 - Hardships of the Apostolate (Matthew 10:37-42)

Jesus instructed the twelve as follows: 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me. 'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man's reward. 'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'



3 Reflect

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

At the end of this collection of sayings of Jesus about the mission of the Christian apostolate, Matthew puts a whole series of daunting challenges. Luke gives almost all the same sayings, but scattered in different contexts. The last saying is only in Mark as well. Believing as we do that the composition of the gospel is inspired, even to the selection and ordering of the sayings of Jesus, we can see this group of sayings as a series of challenges not to take up Christianity without serious forethought. There is no such thing as non-apostolic Christianity, but by becoming Christians we take on a share in Christ's own task of spreading the Good News. The challenge is great but the reward is certain.

First comes a trio of sayings to show the absolute priority of Christ's claims, over the closest family ties, over life and finally over possession of one's own self. Then comes a quartet of promises of rewards to those who welcome Christ's messengers. The envoy is placed equal with the principal: Christ's messenger is as Christ, Christ as his Father. Then in detail the reward for welcome of a prophet, of any upright person, and finally of the Christian in need.

What is the closest tie you have on earth? Can Jesus be more important than that?

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 2nd July 2023



First Reading: *Elisha and the Woman of Shunem*

2 Kings 4:8-11. 14-16

One day as Elisha was on his way to Shunem, a woman of rank who lived there pressed him to stay and eat there. After this he always broke his journey for a meal when he passed that way. She said to her husband, 'Look, I am sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God. Let us build him a small room on the roof, and put him a bed in it, and a table and chair and lamp; whenever he comes to us he can rest there.'

One day when he came, he retired to the upper room and lay down. 'What can be done for her?' he asked. Gehazi, his servant, answered, 'Well, she has no son and her husband is old.' Elisha said, 'Call her.' The servant called her and she stood at the door. 'This time next year,' Elisha said 'you will hold a son in your arms.'

This is a lovely story of hospitality repaid; it is given to us here to illustrate one sentence in the gospel, that hospitality given to a prophet earns the reward of a prophet. In fact, we are here told only half the story, for later the child suddenly sickens and dies (possibly of sunstroke), and the prophet bring the child back to life. Almost the same story is told of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17; the similarities in the way the story is told show that the evangelist Luke had this in mind when he told the story of Jesus raising to life the son of the Widow of Naim, which ends with the popular acclaim, 'A great prophet has risen among us; God has visited his people' (Luke 7:11-16). In Luke, Jesus is frequently presented as a prophet and more than a prophet, for instance in his opening manifesto in the synagogue at Nazareth, where Jesus likens his mission to that of Elisha and Elijah (Luke 4:16-30). The Ascension is also described in terms of the prophet Elijah being carried up to heaven, while his disciple looks on (2 Kings 2:11).

How is the aspect of Christ as prophet helpful to our understanding of him?

Second Reading: *Baptism into Christ*

Romans 6:3-4. 8-11

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more. When he died, he died, once for all, to sin, so his life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

“ Christ's story becomes
my story. Christ's strength
becomes my strength. ”

Last Sunday's reading from Romans explained to us how Christ is the Second Adam, by his obedience undoing the disobedience of Adam. The reaction may be, 'But what has that to do with me? How does it benefit me?' The answer here given is that we were baptized into Christ's death so that we are joined to him and will be transformed by his Resurrection. The Greek baptizo means 'plunge into': we are plunged into Christ's death. Our life is now Christ's life, although not yet transformed like his. Paul coins a whole series of new words beginning with 'syn-' (a formation similar to 'synchronized' or 'synthetic') to show how our life is merged into Christ's. The most expressive of all is that we are synphytoi with Christ: this word is used in medical terminology to express how two parts of a broken bone grow together again and merge into a bond stronger than the original. By my baptism into Christ's death, his death becomes mine. Christ's story becomes my story. Christ's strength becomes my strength. Christ's body becomes my body. Christ's risen life becomes my risen life.

What effect should this identification with Christ have on our relationships with other Christians?

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

w: www.wednesdayword.org

e: info@wednesdayword.org