Wednesday 24th October 2012 - A WEEKLY PRAYER CUSTOM

THE WEDNESDAY WORD

The Parish Version

LECTIO DIVINA

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

Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 28th October 2012 - The Thirtieth Sunday of 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 28th October 2012 (Mark 10:46-52): Blind Bartimaeus

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to say, "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me." And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man. "Courage," they said, "get up; he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabbuni," the blind man said to him, "Master, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved you." And immediately his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

3 Reflect

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

There are several remarkable things about this story. Firstly, the scene is just when Jesus is leaving Jericho. Jericho is about three hours' walk from Jerusalem, up a great, rocky canyon. When you leave Jericho you know you are just about coming to Jerusalem. It is the last village on the way, and (as we heard in last week's gospel) the excitement of what is to happen in Jerusalem (the great revelation of Jesus' glory at the Passion) is already upon those who are journeying with him; the cured beggar dances on the way with them. Secondly, the beggar is the only person in Mark to call Jesus 'Son of David', drawing attention to Jesus' messianic ancestry and preparing for his messianic entry into Jerusalem. Thirdly, in Mark Jesus says 'Your faith has cured you' only twice. The first time was to the woman with a haemorrhage, who had shown her faith with great courage by daring to touch Jesus' garment in the crowd. Now Bartimaeus shows the same stubborn courage in carrying on shouting despite the attempts to silence him. So both these people show with their courage that they really do put their trust in Jesus and are confident that he will help them. If our faith is to save us, it needs to be real, courageous and stubborn. Lukewarm, tentative faith is not enough.

How do we show our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

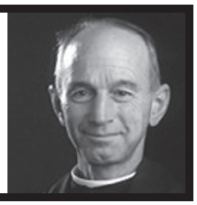
4 Respond & Request

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 28th October 2012



First Reading: *Israel is my First-born Son*

Jeremiah 31:7-9

The Lord says this: Shout with joy for Jacob! Hail the chief of nations! Proclaim! Praise! Shout! "The Lord has saved his people, the remnant of Israel!" See, I will bring them back from the land of the North and gather them from the far ends of earth; all of them: the blind and the lame, women with child, women in labour: a great company returning here. They had left in tears, I will comfort them as I lead them back; I will guide them to streams of water, by a smooth path where they will not stumble. For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born son.

The most remarkable feature of this prophecy of Jeremiah is that Jeremiah spoke it when the destruction of Jerusalem was certain. The city was about to collapse and its inhabitants were to be dragged into captivity across the desert on meat-hooks. Yet Jeremiah proclaims that the Lord has saved his people! Destruction is so certain that Jeremiah can speak of it in the perfect tense: it has virtually already happened. In the midst of disaster he declares that the Lord is a father to Israel, and Israel his cherished first-born son! Even the blind (pointing us to the gospel miracle) and the lame will be gathered in. They will have to wait for the final fulfilment, but this promise remains a beacon of hope for them. There are times in everyone's life when everything goes wrong and seemingly irremediable disaster strikes. In those dark moments we know that the same promise holds for us. In the Spirit we can still cry out 'Abba, Father'. The household of the Lord is a Church composed entirely of first-born sons - and daughters: according to the Law of Israel only sons had a right of inheritance, so even the daughters of the Church are rightly described as first-born 'sons'!

How can people "from the far ends of earth" call God "father" if they have never heard of Him?

Second Reading: *High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek*

Hebrews 5:1-6

Every high priest has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; and so he can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives in the limitations of weakness. That is why he has to make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honour on himself, but each one is called by God, as Aaron was. Nor did Christ give himself the glory of becoming high priest, but he had it from the one who said to him: You are my son, today I have become your father, and in another text: You are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and forever.

'He can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain'. To single out these two characteristics and to grant that Jesus could be uncertain or ignorant is a bold assertion about Jesus' full humanity. Yet ignorance and the ability to learn is a condition of humanity: the child Jesus must have learnt how to deal with fire and knives and other dangers, and there is no way of learning which is better than initially getting it wrong. Similarly uncertainty is a crucial human condition: it is at once an openness to learning and a reminder of humility. The two unique elements of Jesus' priesthood are total ability to sympathise with us, and his unmediated link to his Father. These make his priesthood (his representation on our behalf to the Father and his wholehearted offering of himself in obedience to the Father) far more immediate than any formal priesthood (such as that of the priestly line of Aaron) could ever be.

What does it mean to say the Jesus "lives in the limitations of weakness"?

> "He can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain."

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

w: www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org

® *The Wednesday Word* Ltd. A registered Charity in England and Wales limited by guarantee – 1125628 © Copyright 2012 *The Wednesday Word* Trust