

THE WEDNESDAY WORD

The Parish Version

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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 1st July 2018 - 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 1st July 2018 (Mark 5:21-43): Two Cures of Women

When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lakeside. Then one of the synagogue officials came up, Jairus by name, and seeing him, fell at his feet and pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her to make her better and save her life." Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him. Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it, in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his cloak. "If I can touch even his clothes," she had told herself, "I shall be well again." And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. Immediately aware that power had gone out from him Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "You see how the crowd is pressing round you and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. "My daughter," he said, "your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint." While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the synagogue official to say, "Your daughter is dead: why put the Master to any further trouble?" But Jesus had overheard this remark of theirs and he said to the official, "Do not be afraid; only have faith." And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the official's house and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep." But they laughed at him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, "Talitha, kumi!" which means, "Little girl, I tell you to get up." The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At this they were overcome with astonishment, and he ordered them strictly not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

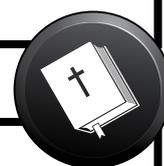
3 Reflect

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

The author of the Gospel of Mark likes to combine incidents to show their joint significance, often, as here, sandwiching one story between the two halves of another. In this instance it is surely significant that both recipients of Jesus' healing love are women. Only a minority of Jesus' miracles concern women, and the bringing together of these two, one a girl and the other an old woman, serves to stress their importance to Jesus. It is unfair to accuse the Bible of being male-dominated. A mother's devotion is a frequent image of God's love. There are plenty of feisty women in the Old Testament, who put their men-folk to shame by their courage, enterprise and initiative: Rebecca, Tamar, Deborah, Ruth, Esther, Judith. Jesus' own relationships with women seem to have been easy and even humorous. One need only think of his playful bargaining with the Syro-Phoenician over the cure of her daughter, or the jokey exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, not to mention his delicacy towards the woman taken in adultery or the sinful woman who showed her love by weeping at his feet. Paul also clearly relied in many ways in his apostolate on the ministry of women.

Why are these two stories interlocked? What is common to the two people healed?

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 1st July 2018



First Reading: *Immortality*

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

Death was not God's doing; he takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living. To be - for this he created all; the world's created things have health in them; in them no fatal poison can be found, and Hades holds no power on earth; for virtue is undying. Yet God did make man imperishable; he made him in the image of his own nature; it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world, as those who are his partners will discover.

The first reading, as so often, looks towards the gospel reading, where Jesus raises the little girl from death. It takes the opportunity to reflect on death in God's scheme of things. For those who have no faith, death rules everything. It is the absolute end, perhaps a release from suffering, but always a tragedy for somebody, the awesome end-point from which there is no return. The Book of Wisdom was written at a time when belief in immortality and the resurrection was emerging in Israel. Earlier Israel had believed that the dead dwelt in a sort of powerless half-life in Sheol (not unlike the Greek Hades), where it is impossible even to pray. But Israel came to realise that the love of God for every person was so strong that it could never be broken off by death. As Jesus was to say, God is a God not of the dead but of the living. This reading is wonderfully positive and ebullient, for God is a God of life in all its positive forms, and these are all a reflection of God's own life. The fullest of all these reflections is the life of each human individual, created in the image of God.

How should we imagine life after death?

Second Reading: *Generous Giving*

2 Corinthians 8:7.9.13-15

You always have the most of everything - of faith, of eloquence, of understanding, of keenness for any cause, and the biggest share of our affection - so we expect you to put the most into this work of mercy too. Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was: he was rich, but he became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of his poverty. This does not mean that to give relief to others you ought to make things difficult for yourselves: it is a question of balancing what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need. That is how we strike a balance: as scripture says: 'The man who gathered much had none too much; the man who gathered little did not go short'.

“ The basic principle of Christian generosity: the imitation of Christ, who gave himself wholly in love. ”

Paul's Letter to the Galatians shows that there was a major disagreement in the early Church between those who held that Christians must still obey the Jewish Law and those who did not. The Law-party was led by the Church at Jerusalem under James, brother of the Lord. After all, he argued, Christianity is the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, the fulfilment of Judaism! Paul set about healing the breach by making a great collection from his gentile Churches to take to the Church at Jerusalem as an act of homage and friendship. There seem to have been many poor people at Jerusalem, whom the people of such a bustling and successful harbour-town as Corinth could help. Paul writes in this letter, giving the basic principle of Christian generosity: the imitation of Christ, who gave himself wholly in love. Yet he also gives the invaluable principle that each individual's conscience is the only yardstick. Not all of us can reach our human fulfilment by living in the destitution of St Francis of Assisi, and each must judge their giving by their own conscience. Some Christian communities prescribe one tenth of their income in giving. Paul avoids any mathematical formula, for circumstances and obligations differ - as well as generosity.

How could we respond in generosity to the needs of the poor and of the Church throughout the world?

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