



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018 - The Fifteenth 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 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (Mark 6:7-13): Instructions for Missionaries**

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff - no bread, no haversack, no coppers for their purses. They were to wear sandals but, he added, "Do not take a spare tunic." And he said to them, "If you enter a house anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. And if any place does not welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the dust from under your feet as a sign to them." So they set off to preach repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.



**3** Reflect

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

*The instructions for missionaries are shaped by the urgency of the Kingdom. The Twelve are to travel light for speed. They should wear sandals rather than go barefoot, also for speed and security. They are to rely for their provisions on the welcome they receive and, if they are unwelcome, they should not waste time on those who reject them. Did Jesus think that the Kingdom or Kingship of God would finally burst on the world in his own time, that there was so little time to spare? In one way it did – at his death and Resurrection, which fulfilled God's plan and restored us to friendship with God. In another way the Kingdom is still in the future: the reign of peace and justice is not yet established. There is still sorrow, distress, enmity, fraud, jealousy and plenty of other evils which fracture God's Kingship. We are still imperfect reflections of the light of Christ, still pilgrim members of a pilgrim Church. Our efforts are often feeble, even when we try to walk in Christ's footsteps. We cannot sit back complacently, any more than the missionaries of Jesus' own time. The task of establishing the Kingdom is still imminent.*

**How can we missionaries best bring Christ's light and God's joy to the world?**

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 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018



## First Reading: *The Unwilling Messenger*

### Amos 7:12-15

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, said to Amos, "Go away, seer; get back to the land of Judah; earn your bread there, do your prophesying there. We want no more prophesying in Bethel; this is the royal sanctuary, the national temple." "I was no prophet, neither did I belong to any of the brotherhoods of prophets," Amos replied to Amaziah. "I was a shepherd, and looked after sycamores: but it was the Lord who took me from herding the flock, and the Lord who said, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

*Amos had a tricky task on his hands. He was sent unwillingly by God from the neighbouring kingdom of Judah to tell their bitter rivals in the kingdom of Israel to change their ways, to stop exploiting the poor and the weak and to bring sacrifices which were a real expression of homage to God who champions the needy and the powerless. No surprise that he was booted out of the national shrine and told to go off home and mind his own business. We don't like prophets who try to shake us out of our comfortable ways, pointing out our inadequacies, challenging us to be true to God's plans for us. In vain Amos insisted that he was not a professional trouble-maker, that all he had wanted was a quiet life looking after his flocks and herds and sycamore trees. But then the Lord had insisted on giving him this special task of prophesying. The exciting thing about being a Christian is that we never know when we will be called by the Lord to do some special task, great or small – even if it is only welcoming the unexpected and tiresome visitor and remembering that he or she comes in the place of Christ.*

*What would a prophet have to say today about God's will for our society?*

## Second Reading: *The Cosmic Plan of God*

### Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins. Such is the richness of the grace which he has showered on us in all wisdom and insight. He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning to act upon when the times had run their course to the end: that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth. And it is in him that we were claimed as God's own, chosen from the beginning, under the predetermined plan of the one who guides all things as he decides by his own will; chosen to be, for his greater glory, the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came. Now you too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation, and have believed it: and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise, the pledge of our inheritance which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own, to make his glory praised.

*Today we start reading the great letter to the Ephesians, the first of seven Sunday readings. Many scholars think that this letter was written not by Paul himself, but by a follower steeped in Paul's thought. Gone are the old problems of Jew and gentile; reflections are on a cosmic scale, and Christ is evaluated in terms of the cosmic powers. The letter is quite different in style to Paul's other letters and develops many of his ideas. Perhaps it is the first commentary on Paul's writings. The sevenfold blessing with which the letter begins sums up God's plan of salvation for humanity. The climax is in the centre of today's reading, 'to bring everything under Christ as head'. Christ is the Wisdom of God, the plan according to which and through which all things were created. Christ is also the completion of the creation - and the unity of all things in Christ is a special emphasis of this letter. All things are under Christ as head of creation: he is all nourishment for creation and all guidance of creation. These are the functions which a head performs for a body, and these are the functions which Christ performs for creation.*

*What does it mean to say everything has been brought together "under Christ, as head"?*

“Christ is the Wisdom of God.”

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w: [www.wednesdayword.org](http://www.wednesdayword.org) e: [info@wednesdayword.org](mailto:info@wednesdayword.org)