



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019 - The Sixth 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

**The Gospel for Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019 - The Beatitudes (Luke 6:17. 20-26)**

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said: 'How happy are you who are poor; yours is the kingdom of God. Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied. Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh. Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets. But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now. Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry. Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep. Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.



**3** Reflect

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

*Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and Luke's Sermon on the Plain are both collections of sayings of Jesus about the basic conditions of Christian living. Each begins with a set of 'Beatitudes', announcing who is specially blessed by the Lord. One frisky modern translation renders them, 'Congratulations to you who are...!' Matthew's set of eight Beatitudes focuses more on spiritual qualities, poor in spirit, hunger and thirst for justice, whereas Luke's four are more directly on the circumstances of life. The stress is therefore on the reversal of values which Jesus brings. Jesus turns the world upside-down. His gospel or 'good news' comes to the poor, the neglected, the oppressed. True blessedness does not consist in wealth, fame or festivities. It is those who struggle now who will receive a lasting reward. Are the four negatives which follow too hard on the rich, the contented, the frivolous, the famous? Through this gospel runs a thread of warning about the dangers of contentment, and we seldom pay attention to warnings unless they are overstated! The worry of those who have plenty (about how they should use their advantages responsibly for others) must be as least as great as those who worry to survive.*

***Is money a positive bar to eternal happiness, or a challenge?***

**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 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019



## First Reading: *A Curse and a Blessing*

### Jeremiah 17:5-8

The Lord says this: 'A curse on the man who puts his trust in man, who relies on things of flesh, whose heart turns from the Lord. He is like dry scrub in the wastelands: if good comes, he has no eyes for it, he settles in the parched places of the wilderness, a salt land, uninhabited. A blessing on the man who puts his trust in the Lord, with the Lord for his hope. He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of drought, and never ceases to bear fruit.'

*Actually, this passage is neither a curse nor a blessing. It is not invoking or wishing upon a person the blessing or the curse. Instead, the prophet is here saying that people who behave in these two ways are respectively blessed and accursed. There is no need to wish it on them, for their own behaviour merits it and brings it on themselves. Such statements of blessing and its opposite are frequent in the Bible; an example very similar to this is in Psalm One. In Jeremiah's prophecy here, unlike most of the instances in the Bible of 'beatitudes' in both Old and New Testaments, there is no list of ways of moral conduct; blessing is simply a matter of trust or faith. It is not a person's achievements which count, for we cannot earn blessedness; we can only trust in God. However, if God is the real centre of our trust and reliance, we will try to behave as we were created, in the image of God, imitating the divine generosity, forgiveness, attentiveness to human need, fostering life rather than restricting it. This will mean that our heart is truly turned to the Lord, and the Lord will care for us, as the stream does the tree.*

*How true is it that we bring blessing and curse on ourselves?*

## Second Reading: *A People of the Resurrection*

### 1 Corinthians 15:12. 16-20

If Christ raised from the dead is what has been preached, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, you are still in your sins. And what is more serious, all who have died in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate of all people. But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.

*As he nears the end of his great letter to the Corinthians, which we have been reading for five Sundays, Paul teaches about the resurrection, the bedrock of Christian faith. Last Sunday he was rehearsing the most primitive proclamation, that Christ had truly risen from the dead and had encountered a host of witnesses. Now Paul tackles the resurrection of Christians, of which Christ's resurrection is the first fruits and the model. The importance of Christ's resurrection is not only that it places him in glory at his Father's right hand, but also that it is the forerunner of our own resurrection. We can know little about the transformation which will take place in us at the resurrection. We will be physical, but physical in a quite different way. The glorified body is a body, but not like any body which we know. The traditional Christian picture of clouds and harps is not to be taken too seriously. The only important thing is that we will be wrapped or rapt in the joy of the presence of God, enveloped in utter contentment. Nothing else will matter but the enjoyment of the most lovable of all beings.*

*Why will it not be possible to get bored in heaven?*

“ We will be wrapped in the joy of the presence of God. ”

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