



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019 - The Fifth Sunday of Easter

**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 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019 - The Commandment of Love (John 13:31-35)**

When Judas had gone Jesus said, "Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and in him God has been glorified. If God has been glorified in him, God will in turn glorify him in himself, and will glorify him very soon. My little children, I shall not be with you much longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples."



**3** Reflect

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

*From now until Pentecost the readings from St John's Gospel are taken from the great final teaching of Jesus at the Last Supper about the future of his Church and his disciples. From the sayings of Jesus the evangelist has composed a great discourse of Jesus about the obligations, duties and dangers which will come upon his disciples after his own death and resurrection. There were probably slightly different versions of this discourse, which were handed down by word of mouth; the impression of repetition in the discourse probably results from the evangelist recording three versions one after another. As we approach the Birth of the Church at Pentecost we need to listen to how Jesus envisaged his community. Today's reading gives the essentials. At the head of the Christian community stands the glorified Son of Man, in whom God is glorified. But this Son is no distant figurehead, for he will come to be present among his disciples. How will this happen? Answer: in the love which his disciples show for one another. One is reminded of the legend about the aged St John, wheeled into the church at Ephesus. When asked for the message of Jesus, all he would say was, 'My little children, love one another.'*

**How has Jesus shown his love for us? How do you show that same love for someone else?**

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 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019



## First Reading: *The End of Paul's First Missionary Journey*

### Acts 14:21-27

Paul and Barnabas went back through Lystra and Iconium to Antioch. They put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith. "We all have to experience many hardships," they said, "before we enter the kingdom of God." In each of these churches they appointed elders, and with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. They passed through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. Then after proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia and from there sailed for Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On their arrival they assembled the church and gave an account of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the pagans.

*Antioch was a big city, one of the largest in the ancient world. On the Mediterranean coast of the Roman province of Syria, it was at the end of the trade-route from the east. So it had a busy commercial life with a large colony of Jews among the traders. A considerable group of them accepted Jesus as Messiah and Lord, and it was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians' or 'Messianists'; other Jews thought that the Messiah had not yet come. It was at Antioch that the well-trained and eloquent Paul was appointed to accompany Barnabas (who at this stage was the leader) in spreading the Good News about Jesus as the Messiah. At the end of their journey they reported back to the community at Antioch. It is significant that Barnabas and Paul appointed elders in each community they visited; this was the normal way in which a Jewish community was constituted. A synagogue is still today ruled by a body of elders, one of whom is chosen to preside at services. Obviously, in spite of the bad reception Paul and other Christians sometimes received (as we read last Sunday), these Christian communities felt themselves to be like the other Jewish communities, though accepting Jesus as Messiah, and living by his Spirit.*

*To what extent (as a Christian) should my behaviour be different from that of other people?*

## Second Reading: *The New Jerusalem*

### Revelation 21:1-5

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, "You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone." Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: "Now I am making the whole of creation new."

*Like so much of the Book of Revelation, this prophecy of the New Jerusalem is heavily dependent on the prophets of the Old Testament. In the dark days of the Babylonian Exile the prophet Ezekiel had foretold that God would rebuild Jerusalem as a new city where God would dwell, a city named Hephzibah, that is, 'My pleasure is in her'. The prophets had long spoken of the relationship of Israel to God as that of a bride to her husband, a bride who was often unfaithful. Isaiah, however, had foretold a joyful marriage feast in which God would be the bridegroom and Jerusalem the bride, the final wedding of God to his people. God's bride, Israel, who had so often been unfaithful, would at last be wedded to him for ever in fidelity and happiness. This was the intended meaning of the marriage-feast at Cana and of the parables of Jesus about a wedding-feast of the great king, to which the poor and the outcasts would be invited. Here the Book of Revelation promises just such a festival to those who have sustained the grimness of Roman persecution. Now, as we celebrate Christ's triumph over death at Easter, we look forward to this same unalloyed happiness experienced in God's presence and his love.*

*If God lives among us now, where and how can I most clearly find him?*

“We look forward to the happiness of God's presence and his love.”

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