



THE LORD'S DAY

1st Sunday of Advent (Year C)

The Watermead Apostolate offers this weekly newsletter as a helpful guide and background to the readings used at our Catholic Mass each Sunday. Watermead began in 1992 as a voice for people who wish to share understanding of living their faith through their various God-given gifts and talents. We frame these gifts by publishing them as books, cards and resources - and we record and publish the music. We also arrange retreats and pilgrimages.

For information about the work of our apostolate, to download our resources or to offer newsletter contributions, do feel welcome to contact us at:

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First Reading

Jeremiah 33 : 14-16

The year is 587 BC, the year of the conquest of Jerusalem and Judah. Jeremiah has been imprisoned by Zedekiah, the king, for being too outspoken and certain about the fall of Jerusalem - but in a symbolic act in chapter 32 the prophet had bought a field as a sign of confidence that peace would one day return to the Holy Land.

In today's reading we feel the sadness of the double message to the houses of Judah and Israel. The kingdom of God's people had been split since the reign of Roboam, Solomon's son, whose tyrannical rule caused a renewal of the divisions healed by his grandfather, King David. The reading seems to imply that a descendant of David will bring unity and peace to the land, restoring the integrity of God's people.

Jerusalem will be given a new name for a new age, and in the verses that follow we learn that the old monarchy will not be restored - but a priestly kingship will bring new revelation of God's love.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3 : 12-13, & 4 : 2

Here is the first letter of St. Paul that we have, written from Corinth in AD 50-51. It is a gentle and encouraging letter, warm in its understanding of the Thessalonian's courage in time of persecution.

Chapter 3 tells of Timothy's mission to Thessalonica, how glad he was to see the strong faith of the people and how joyful Paul feels at sharing the news. He tells them (v10) that he prays for them constantly and hopes to see them again.

The warmth of Paul's feelings fill the verses of today's reading. May God bless them, increase their love and help them make progress in the spiritual life.

See the Trinitarian prayer, not fully formulated, in which God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ work together. Note Paul's wish that the people will grow in love so that they may grow in holiness. It is a daily growing that Paul urges - moral and spiritual growth: each day lived for God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 21 : 25-28, 34-36

Chapter 21 opens quietly with the touching story of the widow and her mite. Her story echoes today's second reading of living faith and love each day. The widows had a daily living allowance from the community, so the point about her story is that she gave all she had for today, knowing she would be given enough for the morrow - but content not to build up a reserve. She gives to God all she does not need.

The chapter develops into conversation about the Temple and Jesus' warning that it will be destroyed, which becomes an image of the end of the world; and then to the warning to live wisely, in the knowledge that all life will come to an end.

The end of the passage is advice to live a good life so that whatever the circumstances of death we shall be ready to come before God. In verses 37-38 we see Jesus' pattern of life and work: by day, preaching in the Temple; by night, praying on the Mount of Olives.

EACH DAY LIVE FOR GOD
Jeremiah foresees a new age;
Paul encourages daily growth in love;
Jesus warns time will end.

*This week I shall . . .
offer God a moment
in prayer on every hour.*

Wisdom from the Saints



"I'm
praying
in the
rain"

A mother saint
in our parish

Questions of Faith

Sacrament of the Present Moment

A rich theme of spiritual writing and guidance developed in the Church in the 17th and 18th centuries. Each individual moment of the day was seen as something precious to offer to God ~ a prayer, a good deed, a friendly word: everything could be made holy by being offered to God.

"Sacrifice" is a beautiful word meaning "to make holy" ~ *sacrum facere*. This way of thinking led writers and spiritual guides to see that it was the love with which we did something that gave it its true value: the smallest deed done for love would be greater than an important act performed selfishly.

The Sacrament of the Present Moment became the way of expressing the value of every moment of every day. In St. Paul's reading today ~ it is there!

People of God

Brenda knew that her life was coming to a close. She was a lovely elderly lady, happy in her family over the many years, and had been in hospital for several weeks. On this Saturday night she had asked for the priest to come that she might receive Holy Communion for the last time. He came, willingly. They prayed, she received Holy Communion and he anointed her. He offered to stay, but she smilingly refused. It was Sunday tomorrow, she reminded him, and he would be busy. He needed to go home and have a good sleep, and she would "wait for the Lord".

The priest walked down the hill from the hospital. He pondered her words "I'll lie here, and wait for the Lord." He felt blessed to have shared her peace and hoped that when his day came he would be as at peace as Brenda was.

Early on the Sunday morning he phoned the hospital ward. Brenda had died peacefully in the early hours. He shared her peace. The Lord had come. It was Brenda's Advent.

"Advent" is "a coming", which we celebrate in three ways: we look forward to the feast of the Incarnation during the weeks of Advent; we look forward to Jesus' coming at the end of time when his kingdom will be complete; and we know that each of us will have our own Advent - the Lord will come, and we shall be with him. We should prepare . . .