



THE LORD'S DAY

5th Sunday of 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

Isaiah 6 : 1-8

The year is 740 BC. The prophet's experience seems to be set in the Temple at Jerusalem. He is overwhelmed by his sense of the presence and holiness of God. The Seraphim cry out the holiness of God and Isaiah feels the Temple shake. It is probably a great feast, possibly the divine kingship of God which was celebrated every autumn to begin the New Year.

The Seraphim are strange six-winged creatures, recalling the Cherubim of 1 Kings 6:23-28 who had human heads and winged animal bodies. They are awe-inspiring, even frightening. What imagination is at work here?

The power of today's reading is that in the setting of the Temple and the vision of the Heavenly Court Isaiah receives his call to serve God and the people by proclaiming the truth to them. It seems a wonderfully reassuring message, but verses 9 and 10 are an extraordinary contrast: God does not want the people to hear Isaiah's message! Jesus quotes this passage when asked why he spoke in parables (Matthew 13:14, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10).

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

This is a powerful summary of Christian belief, the Resurrection appearances - and Paul's sorrowful humility: he had persecuted Christ.

He seems to be concerned that in the disunity of the Corinthian community false beliefs are gaining influence. The Gospel he gave is the truth because he had received it from Christ himself (verse 8).

The Resurrection is the basis of belief. Christ died for our sins (the Old Testament animal sacrifice for sin no longer needed); he was buried because he had truly died, and he came to life on the third day. Twice Paul says "according to the Scriptures" and must be referring to the Old Testament because no Gospel had yet been written (we are only in 56-57 AD).

Whilst we understand fulfillment of Scripture in Christ's complete redeeming sacrifice, we find puzzling Paul's reference to "Resurrection on the third day" as fulfilling the Scriptures. We search and find: the Old and New Testaments have many references to the Third Day as the day of God's blessing - it is a Biblical motif. All "third days" thus become images of the Resurrection!

Note the number and variety of Jesus' appearances. They are not in the Gospel . . .

HUMAN LIFE IS THREE DAYS
Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

*This week I shall . . .
remember, ponder, look forward*

Gospel Reading

Luke 5 : 1-11

This is a warm human story. Jesus has already begun his ministry alone (Chapter 4:14-44) - teaching, healing, casting out devils: a powerful start to a unique ministry. He has been to Simon's house in Capernaum to heal Simon's mother-in-law, and the local people have adopted him as their own - do not want him to leave them. He has newly made his home in Capernaum.

The tiny details of today's reading (2 boats, washing nets, etc.) are preface to an extraordinary event: fishermen to become disciples and apostles. Simon is overwhelmed by the catch of fish and the realisation that his friend, who had cured his mother-in-law, is more than human: "Leave me, Lord" - but he and the others do obey the Lord's wishes and become disciples.

When we read Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, John 1:35-42 we realise we do not understand. Jesus called these four apostles first - but how and where have three different settings! Only the central truth is common: he called, they responded.

Wisdom from the Saints



"The soul is in God and God in the soul,
like fish in the sea and sea in the fish"

St. Catherine of Siena

Questions of Faith

The Third Day. You would have a wonderful time browsing the Bible for events that happened "on the third day". . .

Abraham and Isaac (*Genesis 22*), Moses and Mount Sinai (*Exodus 19*), Joshua and the Crossing of the Jordan (*Judges 3*), Jonah in the belly of the whale (*Jonah 2*) and crossing the city of Nineveh (*Jonah 3*), Esther approaching the king (*Esther 15*), Judith plotting against Holofernes (*Judith 12*), Wedding Feast at Cana (*John 2*), Healing of the nobleman's son (*John 4* - Jesus stayed two days at Sychar and then returned to Capernaum), Finding in the Temple (*Luke 2*), Healing of Lazarus (*John 11:6* - Jesus moves on the third day), Jesus' Resurrection . . .

People of God

St. Bernadette of Lourdes is one of the best known and loved saints in the history of the Church. All pilgrims to Lourdes share her story: the Boly Mill, the Cachot, the Maison Paternelle, No. 14 Rue du Bourg, the Parish Church . . . and the Domaine with its centre at the Grotto. We are fascinated that a little girl in a small village should be chosen by Our Lady to be her messenger of love and prayer - and how many have heard that message over the years since Bernadette first received it! We are grateful for the opportunity to share her prayer and faith, to know of miracles, to know of love and friendship and community that is the constant witness of the Lourdes story. All pilgrims have added their personal prayer and each new pilgrim becomes aware of the legacy of devotion and prayer that is waiting to be shared and added to. St. Bernadette, by her faith and love, has blessed so many. On 11th February we celebrate "Our Lady of Lourdes" and our saint.