



THE LORD'S DAY

6th 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:

Watermead Apostolate, The Watermead Centre, c/o St. Joseph's, 12 Goodwood Road, Leicester LE5 6SG : Telephone 0044 (0)116 220 7881 / 7880
Download newsletters from www.watermead-apostolate.com Contact us via the **Contact us Page** on our shop website www.watermeadshop.co.uk

First Reading

Jeremiah 17 : 5-8

Jeremiah was not married - very unusual for a man of Israel - and came to see in his single state a sign of the disruption of the family life of the nation. Chapter 16 already has given us some of that understanding.

Now, in chapter 17, the prophet speaks of the falseness of Judah before God - idolatry, empty ritual, hearts of stone - and in today's reading he makes contrast between those who trust in men and those who trust in God.

The heart that turns away from God, says Jeremiah, turns everything into a wilderness and the beauty of creation fades: but those who love and serve God are full of life and know no fears.

Verses 9 and 10 express the powerful lesson that we cannot truly know ourselves nor know one another - but God sees fully, and judges accordingly.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15 : 12, 16-20

Do go to your copy of the New Testament and read the verses omitted by today's liturgy: it is a dramatic part of an argument that sounds even desperate.

Paul deserted the Mosaic law to become a Christian, and what pain that must have caused him (and those who loved him): but he still has to live by faith and not with certainty. We sense the awe-full questioning he must have personally faced and he knows many will also have face as they wonder whether to follow the path he took.

Chapter 15 is a surprise after the arguments of chapters 12-14. There, Paul has been warning the community against spiritual pride, possessiveness of God's gifts which are granted for the sake of the whole community: he feared the community might be ruined by factions and jealousies.

Now, in chapter 15, he faces the question that unites them all: are we fools to follow Christ or are Christians the most blessed? He answers his question, but knows that his readers and listeners must ask and answer for themselves.

Gospel Reading

Luke 6 : 17, 20-26

Jesus has just spent the night in prayer, alone out in the hills (verse 12), and when day comes he calls the disciples around him and chooses twelve whom he calls apostles (verses 13-15). It is a vivid picture. We sense the pain of rejection that there might have been for those who were not chosen - feeling excluded, suffering envy and even jealous of those who were favoured. We wonder how many lost heart and ceased to follow Jesus - some disciples did, on other occasions.

With the Twelve around him Jesus comes down the hillside to another gathering of disciples who are with a large crowd. What follows is called the "Sermon on the Plain" in contrast to Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount". Most of what we hear in today's reading is in Matthew who wove other teachings around the original "Beatitudes" and thus Jesus' "sermon" in Matthew is far longer than the one in Luke. Notice that Luke's account has four Beatitudes (Matthew has eight) and four Woes. We ponder the differences . . .

Wisdom from the Saints



"I worry
until
midnight
and from
then on I let
God worry"
Louis Guanella

FAITH IN GOD CAN MAKE US SEEM FOOLISH AND WEAK - Jeremiah and Paul feel that pain, and Jesus' sermon reflects it. God's ways are not our ways, they do not suit our worldly ways.

Questions of Faith

"Q" stands for "Quelle", a German word meaning "Source". Scripture scholars presume a document which contained the sayings of Jesus which Matthew and Luke used as sources for their Gospel accounts.

No copy of "Q" has ever been found, but the fact that about 235 verses in Matthew and Luke are the same does indicate they worked from a common document.

Today's Gospel reading invites us to compare Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" and Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount" to see what different use they made of common material.

People of God

Father was dying. He had been a good priest, faithful in his service of God and of the people in the parishes where he had served. But he had long carried a great pain, shared with no-one until it became part of the peace of his death. He admitted to his friend that he had realised, soon after ordination, that he had made a wrong choice. The details do not matter, but the struggle does. During his final year in the seminary he decided to go on because of the great hurt it might have caused if he didn't. He soon felt that his choice had been wrong - but also knew he had made a promise to God. Now, as he lay dying, he was able to say how glad he was to have kept that promise - in spite of the pain it had caused him through the years of his priesthood. He trusted in God, and was blessed.

How many people know a similar pain in being faithful to commitments and promises. But is it always right to stay with a promise when the mistake has been realised? We think, with sadness and understanding, of husbands and wives who finally separate because the burden of their marriage has become too much, not only for themselves but also for their family. We cannot judge. Some promises, like Father's, bring personal pain that can be quietly shared, in trust, with God; but other promises become impossible to fulfil and need to be dissolved. Then, also, we trust in God for peace and blessing in an imperfect world.

This week I shall look for similarities and differences in Matthew, Mark and Luke.