



# THE LORD'S DAY

## 8th 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

*Sirach 27:4-7*

Do you enjoy reading short sharp words of wisdom? Then you will certainly enjoy reading this book. It is witty, wise, full of good sense and awareness of the gift of a thoughtful mind.

Today's reading tells of the importance of speech – how we may judge and be judged by the way we reveal ourselves in our speaking. We are aware of that, and can be very careful in speaking with strangers, with people we hope to impress, with people who can have influence with us.

But we all need to know how to interpret silence. Some silence is wise, careful listening to judge what may be best to say; other silence is designed to make people feel uncomfortable, and further silence may simply be an empty or ignorant mind having nothing worthwhile to say.

Today's reading invites us to draw people out in conversation, let them reveal themselves as they realise we are truly listening to them. That is honest. The more carefully we listen, the better we understand. We are being judged, too.

### WORD & Words

Speak well of others;  
speak wisely for yourself;  
let God's word be in your words.  
David, also, chose the divine  
rather than the human way.

### Second Reading

*1 Corinthians 15:54-58*

In chapter 15 of this letter Paul has given a summary of his faith, with details not recorded elsewhere: he has argued the supreme sign of Jesus' resurrection as the centre of our belief in eternal life, and he has reasoned that having faith in eternal life enriches our ordinary everyday living. We carry belief in the resurrection into all that we do, enriching life.

Today's reading is a small hymn of joy – life overcomes death, the fear of dying is replaced by the joy of forgiveness and sharing life with Christ. If that final joy is ours nothing can defeat us. Life will end in the joys of forgiveness and eternity and our present living is to know how to bless the simple goodness of every day life.

The ordinary is seen as eternal! God is in everything we do. It is a wonderful vision of the dullness of ordinary life being blessed in the light of Christ.

### Wisdom from the Saints



"God employs several translators  
-some pieces are translated by age,  
some by sickness,  
some by war,  
some by justice."

John Donne

### Gospel Reading

*Luke 6: 39-45*

Just before today's reading Luke has been giving Jesus' teachings on loving enemies and being compassionate to everyone. These are divine ideals: being compassionate as God is compassionate, giving as generously as God has given and gives to the whole world. Accept even unpleasant people as children of God and try to love and understand them as God does.

Then today's reading guides us how to become that person who sees others as God does – we must be people of integrity, judging ourselves and others with equity. Jesus is sharp in mocking our judging the splinter in our neighbours' eye in spite of our needing to squint because of the plank of wood in our own. We don't see straight with that plank of wood, he says. Nor can a bad apple convincingly judge other apples when it has lost its own goodness. It will lack judgement because it is rotten, jealous, wants to taint others with failure because of jealousy. Our hearts overflow into our minds and our words reveal the sort of people we are.

### Questions of Faith

**God's Word** God spoke one word – Jesus, through whom all things were made. How we would love to hear God's voice. We know Jesus, the word of God, and we accept the revelation of God's love reflected in the gospel; but the silence of God in our prayer is disturbing, challenging, and can be destructive.

People give up on prayer because it is all one-directional. The answers they seek are not spoken.

The "silence of eternity" Jesus shared in his times of prayer and we know from the Last Supper how he spoke his prayer: but the silence of God is what he had to hear in the Garden of Gethsamene and when dying on the cross. So we hear the silence of God.

"There's no one there," mock the unbelievers, "no wonder there is silence." That's the question: is God's silence eternal or nothingness?

### People of God

**John Donne** was a gifted poet of the 17th century. Clever, witty and unusual ideas course through his poetry. His images shock, his directness is startling in his love poetry, and his personality seems to be one of playful cynicism and mocking worldliness. His love poetry leaves us feeling sorry for the woman, real or imagined, used and tossed away.

God called him. Donne responded. The poet left the nominalism of his Catholic faith and found true faith in the Church of England. He was ordained a priest. The wit, now subdued and controlled by his love of God, produced beautiful religious poetry. His gifts from God became his gifts to God. The images stun and startle as in his love poems, but he had found a new strength of life, an awareness of what might have been if he had come to know God earlier. "Batter my heart, three-person'd God," he cries; "Wilt Thou forgive that sin" he begs and accuses himself of being vile before receiving the peace of knowing he is forgiven. The author of the book of Sirach knew people like John Donne, perhaps was himself like him. Words reveal us.

This week I shall . . .

receive my ashes on Wednesday and decide on my preparation.