



# THE LORD'S DAY

30th Sunday of Year B : 28th October 2018

The Watermead Apostolate offers this weekly newsletter as a helpful guide and background to the readings used at our Catholic Mass each Sunday. Watermead is the voice of people from many parishes and areas who wish to share understanding of living their faith through their God-given 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 31 : 7-9*

Read carefully chapters 30 and 31. They were written by someone other than Jeremiah as a small "Book of Comfort" amongst the oracles of doom that the prophet himself is best known for. The exile did come to an end, there was new freedom, but the author of these two chapters wants the book to include joy as well as condemnation.

Today's passage pictures the joyful return of the scattered Israelites - exiles, slaves, old coming home and young seeing the promised land for the first time. Everyone seems to be promised a new life, even the infirm and the child in the womb. The tears shed at leaving the Holy Land are replaced by streams that promise fertility, and new paths offer a smooth walk to salvation.

God is Israel's father - and Ephraim's, too. The two conquests, by the Assyrians in 721 and the Babylonians in 587, are imaged here. When the tribes settled after the Exodus from Egypt, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, had the tribal areas named after them. They occupied the great central area of the Holy Land, Samaria, repopulated by the Assyrians.

### GOD'S COMPASSION

for a sad and suffering world ~  
in Jeremiah, the people of Israel;  
in the Gospel, healing of the blind.

*This week I shall . . .  
compare Gospel accounts  
of the same event*

## Second Reading

*Hebrews 5 : 1-6*

Jesus was chosen by God as high priest because such a position could not be open to human ambition but only to divine choice. Like Aaron and Melchizedek, Jesus was chosen.

His work follows on the work of the other priests - offering gifts and sacrifices for personal and the people's sins - and in his humility Jesus understands our failings: but because he is sinless the atonement he makes is perfect.

God did not save Jesus from dying but from death - a far greater blessing. Jesus' human life had to end, be completed, by age or sickness or suddenly. The way that he died was not willed by God, but the way that he accepted his death was to accept God's will completely - and that made it perfect.

By submitting faithfully and lovingly to God's will Jesus deserved to have his prayer heard: he was saved from death in the Resurrection, and raised to glory - to the divinity, made perfect in being priest and victim.

## Wisdom from the Saints



"I pray God  
may open  
your eyes  
and  
let you see  
hidden  
treasures"

St. John of Avila

## Gospel Reading

*Mark 10 : 46-52*

Mark tells of Bartimeus, a blind man. Matthew tells of two blind men but neither is named. Luke says the healing occurred when Jesus was entering Jericho - Mark and Matthew say when he was leaving. This is a delightful glimpse of the human traditions by which the Gospel was formed - small changes which do not obstruct the truth but give evidence of the living communities which change stories in the retellings.

Mark introduces the title "Son of David", a confusing title for non-Jews. St. Paul uses that title only once - at the opening of his letter to the Romans.

Note that in Matthew's account Jesus touches the men's eyes, whilst in Mark and Luke the healing is simply by word. Mark and Luke say the healing is in answer to the man's faith, Matthew says nothing about faith.

After the healing in Matthew and Mark, Jesus goes on to Jerusalem, but Luke tells the story of Zaccheus - still in Jericho.

## Questions of Faith

### Word of God

God reveals the divine word through human words, and the Divine Word through human life.

When we compare passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke we are fascinated by the different tellings of the same event - and glimpse the human communities that told and retold the stories and events of Jesus' life and ministry. We understand that the words alone are not the revelation of truth but are a way of praying to an understanding of God's love mediated through the frailties of human life.

In the Book of Jeremiah we glimpse a similar richness: someone writes in the spirit of the prophet himself, offering consolation alongside the prophet's sadness.

## People of God

**St. Jude the Apostle** is remembered alongside his fellow apostle, St. Simon, on 28th October. He is best known amongst Christians as the patron saint of hopeless cases - though we do not know why! It is possible that people considered Judas the traitor impossible to pray to - and the similarity in name (Jude and Judas are the same name) brought people to say: "Jude is the last one to pray to when everything else fails!"

He speaks only once in the Gospel, asking Jesus at the Last Supper why he doesn't reveal himself to the whole world - and receives the answer that Jesus and the Father will come to all those who love God, and make their abode with them (John 14:22).

Jude's name may also have been Thaddeus. Was he the brother of St. James and St. Matthew, and thus a cousin of Jesus? It is strange that we know so little of the minor apostles. A New Testament Letter bears St. Jude's name - it is a general letter to all Christians.