



# THE LORD'S DAY

31st Sunday of Year B : 4th November 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

Deuteronomy 6 : 2-6

The people are gathered for Moses' farewell discourse, a reminding of God's many blessings and of the Law (Deuteronomy means "a second telling").

In chapter 5 Moses has reminded the people of his being their mediator - speaking to the Lord on their behalf, speaking to them the words of God. The simple message of the Law is to do what God wants (vv.32-33); and then comes today's reading with its strong affirmation of true faith. To follow the commandments, to inherit the land promised to Abraham and his descendants are the message from Moses, and then he expresses the message for their hearts - to love the Lord our God.

The words written on the heart are to be passed to the children of each generation (v.7) and made part of home and every activity. Here is a profound call to daily living the ideals of law and loyalty to the Lord as the one true God and gratitude for delivery from the slavery in Egypt (chapter 6:7-25).

## Second Reading

Hebrews 7 : 23-28

In this powerful section of Hebrews the author is speaking of the priesthood of Christ. Christ is our redeemer (chapter 2:5ff). He is greater than Moses (chapter 3:1-6), he is the supreme high priest chosen by God, not inheriting his priesthood from Aaron or from within the tribe of Levi.

Christ's priesthood is of the order of Melchizedek, the priest of Salem who received tribute and tithes from Abraham. Melchizedek has no origins we know of and thus becomes a sign of an eternal priesthood - which is what Christ inherits (v.18).

Because Christ died and rose from the dead he now has a life that is eternal - and that eternity is proof of his being superior to all high priests. They serve in office for a while. When one dies, another succeeds him. But Christ Jesus cannot lose his priesthood; he is our eternal priest, faultless offerer of a perfect sacrifice - and thus the world is redeemed.

Wonderful as the sacrifice and redemption are, what is more wonderful is that Jesus is God's gift to us. The Father gives us his Son. We wonder at an unknowing and ungrateful world.

## Gospel Reading

Mark 12 : 28-34

Chapter 12 is one of confrontations. Jesus tells the parable of the wicked tenants who kill the son of the vineyard owner. "They" (priests, scribes and elders, chapter 11:27) see the story as one told against them. Herodians and Pharisees challenge Jesus on paying tribute to Caesar. The Sadducees challenge him with a silly story in order to deny the possibility of resurrection. Jesus answers them powerfully (v.26).

Now, in today's reading, a single scribe who had been listening to the debates wants to ask of Jesus a genuine question. Jesus answers and the scribe expresses his approval. He repeats Jesus' answer in a more scholarly way and we see the meeting of two minds - the legal and the pastoral, the Law and the Prophet. Jesus' warm compliment (v.34) concludes a powerful passage. The two essential laws of the Scriptures are quoted twice, but each version complements the other.

In Matthew's account of the same incident (chapter 22:34-40) there is no sincere scribe but only Pharisees trying to challenge Jesus. We wonder at the warmth of Mark's account being ignored by Matthew and Luke. Mark portrays a meeting of two minds, whereas Luke and Matthew portray confrontation.

## Wisdom from the Saints



"Those whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before, they are now with us wherever we go"

St. John Chrysostom

## GOD'S SIMPLE TRUTH

Faithful daily living;  
Christ's redemption a wonderful gift;  
Love of God and neighbour.

This week I shall ...  
Remember and pray for  
departed loved ones

## People of God

**Audrey** was suffering from cancer. The family in their love shared her pain, but they also shared her faith. When they spoke with her, of how hard it must be for her, she had the constant simple answer "I trust in Jesus." They knew what courage and strength that trust gave her and they, too, were fortified in their pain. Over the several years of treatment, during the periods of remission when life became almost normal again, and then when the cancer returned, she and the family accepted and trusted that somehow God's love was holding them and they, in their love, were holding each other.

Today's Gospel reading reminds us that love of God and of one another are the two great blessings, and we wonder at the strangeness of seeing this truth most clearly in times of suffering. To trust God, to be even able to thank God, when we see our loved ones suffer, asks great faith. When we look back and wonder how we came through the pain and the loss we can see that trust in God and one another was our strength.

## Questions of Faith

**Daily Living.** God's gift of life comes one day, one moment, after another. The total gift is seen only at the completion of life - when we have become the person we chose to be, day by day. Time is a treasure, every moment precious because in each moment we can live God's gift. In the moment that we die our life is what we have made it. Each day, each moment, we may change - to become more (or less) pleasant, more (or less) prayerful. The choice to love, or not, is ours . . .