



THE LORD'S DAY

33rd Sunday of Year B : 18th 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

Daniel 12 : 1-3

The Book of Daniel was written about 165 BC. Its purpose was to encourage faith and perseverance amongst the people of Israel dominated by the cruel rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. By telling of Daniel and the trials that he and his companions suffered the author wants to inspire the people of his own day to be equally steadfast.

The Book is in two parts: chapters 1-6 tell of Daniel and his companions during the captivity in Babylon and of the marvels God worked for them; chapters 7-12 are visions granted to Daniel.

The Book is not history. It is fascinatingly imaginative and belongs to the apocryphal style of writing glimpsed in the Book of Ezekiel and fully developed in the Book of Revelation.

The Hebrew Bible places "Daniel" amongst the "other writings" whilst the Greek and Latin place it with the prophets. But "Daniel" is not prophecy, it pseudo-history with a purpose of faith. God is with his people, and Michael guards them as God's representative.

This week I shall . . .
look at the changing skies.

SIGNS

Nature reveals change
and development ~
nothing is permanent, all is passing.

Second Reading

Hebrews 10 : 11-14, 18

The author is a Christian Israelite longing to share his faith in Christ with his fellow Hebrews. He has shown that Jesus of Nazareth is all that the people were hoping for in a Messiah - greater than the angels, supreme high priest, bringer of a new covenant; and now, in chapter 10, we read of the contrast between the sacrifices of the old law and the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice.

The one perfect sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross has taken away all sin. It is an extraordinary claim. The human need for regular forgiveness and reassurance is admitted by the constant making of sin-offerings by the priest of the old Law: but the very repetition, says the author, is proof of their being inadequate.

The world was waiting, and in a beautiful passage Jesus is imagined speaking to his heavenly Father about his readiness to suffer and die to make that sacrifice (10:5-7).

Wisdom from the Saints



"Those who
sing
pray twice"

St. Augustine

(Feast of St. Cecilia
22nd November)

Gospel Reading

Mark 13 : 24-32

Chapter 13 is Jesus' longest speech in Mark's Gospel. He tells of the destruction of the Temple (end of the age) and of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Mark tells us that Jesus spoke these prophecies only to Peter, James, John and Andrew (in that order), but Matthew and Luke suggest that it was to all the disciples.

Jesus speaks of signs; first, of the afflictions the disciples will have to face; then, of the destruction of the Temple; and in today's reading of the coming of the Son of Man, the completion of the Kingdom. The angels of the four winds that will destroy the world (an image carried on in the Book of Revelation) will gather God's elect to the wonder of eternity.

A simple parable ends the reading. We know the seasons and the land - so learn to read the signs of the times. We smile. The signs are always being repeated! Yes, for everyone and for every age the passing and changing nature of the universe can be seen by the human race and by every individual person.

Note in the last line that Jesus' human knowledge is limited.

Questions of Faith

Prophecy

A prophet was one who spoke, acted and wrote under the influence of God to make known to the people the Divine Will. The gift did not necessarily include foreseeing the future, though sometimes the clarity of the prophet's vision inspired by God allowed him (or her - as in the Books of Judges) to see perceptively and thus to be considered far-seeing. The true gift was being enlightened by God's love and inviting the people to share that love, to judge as God wanted them to, thus fulfilling the Divine Will.

The prophet's life was to witness to the truth by word and deed.

O Child, you are from God
and he loves you eternally.
He formed you in the womb,
you're the gift of God's love.
In the springtime of your life
you will grow and laugh and play:
May the peace of Christ be yours
through the love of each day.

The years will follow on
from springtime to summertime;
your world can bloom with joy
in the light of God's love.

You will glorify the Lord
when you walk along the Way:
May the peace of Christ be yours
through the love of each day.

PROPHET OF GOD

God's favour rest with you
through the years of your autumn time;
leaves red and brown and gold
tell the tale of your days.
And the wisdom of the Lord
be in all you do and say:
May the peace of Christ be yours
through the love of each day.

Fear not the darkened skies
when you come to the winter time;
Jesus' birth at Bethlehem
is the promise of spring.

All the ages hear God's word
that the Easter day will come
when the peace of Christ is ours,
joy eternal our home.