



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**1** Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



**2** Read

**Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16)**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

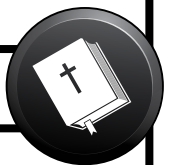
**3** Reflect

**After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.**

*Matthew here takes two piquant images from the words of Jesus which he found in Mark's Gospel and builds on them. This text follows immediately after the Beatitudes, with which he began the Sermon on the Mount; now he shows that these Christian attitudes are not just for our own benefit but are to change the world. The first teaching is a warning, the second a promise. Christians are to be salt for the whole world. Imagine a perpetual diet of food without any tang or taste, soggy and insipid! This would be the world if Christians did not spread the good news of Christ, did not impart to the world the flavour brought by Christ's message. What would the world be without that message and without the challenge of the generosity and salvation of Christ which we profess? Yes, of course much of the same message may come to the world through other great world-faiths, but the full challenge and the full promise is in Christ. The same is true for the second image, that of light. Imagine a world of darkness, where we had to feel our way and are never quite sure of shapes and purposes! And then what a difference occurs when the sun rises over the horizon or the light is switched on. Such is the difference which Christianity – and our Christianity – must make to the world.*

**What is the best way that I can share with my friends the joy of knowing Jesus?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB



**4** Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church  
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †



Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## First Reading: *Authentic Conversion*

### Isaiah 58:7-10

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor; clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry, and the Lord will answer; call, and he will say, 'I am here.' If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.

*Look out! Lent is not far away! We need to start thinking again about genuine conversion, turning back to the Lord. This passage comes far on in the Book of Isaiah, written when the Jews had returned from exile in Babylon; but still things were not going right for them, still the favour of the Lord did not seem to be upon them. This reading makes a good examination of conscience: do I invite the homeless poor to shelter; do I share my advantages with others? Am I at peace with my family? Do I seek to dominate by the 'clenched fist', the wounding word, the put-down which can shrivel someone up? Isaiah is contrasting genuine service of the Lord with the merely exterior practices of religion, the conventional ways in which we may seem to be 'holy' people. In fact, however, holiness is all a matter of the heart, and – at any rate in this text – mostly a matter of seeing and serving God in other people. That is the only way our light can really shine in the darkness, and our own wounds be healed over. As in the Beatitudes, this text reminds us that God's demands always have a promise attached.*

*Why not use this reading to make your examination of conscience?*

## Second Reading: *The Secret of Paul's Success*

### 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

“ The power of the message  
and the promises of Christ. ”

*What was the secret of Paul's success? At times he seems to us boastful, 'Take me as your pattern' (4:16) or 'Be united in imitating me' (Philippians 3:17). He boasts of his faultless Jewish ancestry: 'Are they Hebrews? So am I' (2 Corinthians 11:22 etc.). He claims to have undergone for Christ more sufferings and persecutions than others (2 Corinthians 12), to have been perfect in the Law (Philippians 3:6), to have outstripped his contemporaries in his zeal for the Law (Galatians 1:14). He claims that he speaks in tongues more than any of them, and yet he does not make much of it (1 Corinthians 14:18). Yet here he insists that he came among the Corinthians in weakness, in great fear and trembling in order to make known the power of the Spirit. In the same way he will later admit that he holds the treasure of the light of Christ in fragile pots made of earthenware (2 Corinthians 4:7). There are some wonderful rhetorical passages in Paul, where he exploits to the full the literary and oratorical training he had received, but in the last analysis one must admit that his power consists simply in the power of his message and the promises of Christ.*

*In this passage, St Paul mentions knowing Jesus as the crucified Christ. For you, what does it mean to know Jesus?*

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*

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