



Encountering Christ
Prayerfully preparing for the
Sunday Mass and praying in
particular for our school families



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 2nd January 2022 - The Second Sunday after the Nativity

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

From the Gospel of Sunday 2nd January 2022 (shorter form: John 1: 1-5. 9-14): The Word made Flesh

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower. The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.



3 Reflect

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

The Gospel reading for this Second Sunday after Christmas is the same as that for Christmas Day itself. Perhaps, after all the celebrations of Christmas, there is room for a more sober thought. The climax is not at the end of the reading, but is in the centre: 'to those who believe he gave power to become sons of God'. On either side of this verse are rejection by his own people, and acceptance by those who see his Glory. This theme of acceptance and rejection runs right through the gospel of John, some accepting (the disciples, Nicodemus, the Man Born Blind), some rejecting (the Pharisees, the leaders of the Jews). The disciples accept at the Marriage Feast at Cana; the leaders of the Jews immediately afterwards reject at the Cleansing of the Temple. You cannot remain neutral; you must either accept or reject. It is a great trial-scene, and we judge ourselves by our reaction to Jesus. The Father has given all judgment to the Son, but the Son judges no one. The last dread scene is when the Jewish leaders pass sentence on themselves before Pilate and before Jesus crowned as king and seated as judge; they reject God's kingship by saying, 'We have no king but Caesar'. There is no need for sentence to be passed, for we pass our own sentence on ourselves.

Does it make sense to say that we judge ourselves?

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 2nd January 2022

First Reading: The Wisdom of God takes Root

Sirach 24.1-2.8-12

Wisdom speaks her own praises, in the midst of her people she glorifies herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One; "Then the creator of all things instructed me, and he who created me fixed a place for my tent. He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance.' From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was I established on Zion. In the beloved city he has given me rest, and in Jerusalem I wield my authority. I have taken root in a privileged people in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.'

This wonderful poem, of which we read all too short an extract, celebrates the splendour of Jerusalem, where the Wisdom of God, the Law, took root. The author loves the Law, the Temple and Jerusalem with all his heart, as the gift and manifestation of God. God creates by his Wisdom, the master-plan and agent of creation. Wisdom, expressed in the Law, is also the master-plan which guides God's image and representative, which teaches us how to live as the image of God. So our author sees Jerusalem as the visible symbol of all the beauties of God's creation. We Christians, however, see Christ as this Wisdom of God, who took root in his Chosen People, and in Jerusalem – or at least in Bethlehem, 7km away. For us, then, this hymn is a celebration of God's Wisdom in Christ, taking root in the human race. In Colossians Paul hymns Christ as Wisdom, the first-born in creation and the first-born from the dead. In the great hymn at the beginning of Ephesians Christ is described as the climax in whom all creation is summed up, in whom God 'brings everything together under Christ as head'. The completion of creation is, then, the fullness of the Incarnation which we celebrate at Christmas.

Does it make any sense to speak of God or Christ as Wisdom?

Second Reading: The Cosmic Plan of God

Ephesians 1.3-6, 15-18

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ, for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in Beloved. That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you showed towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit.

The sevenfold blessing, with which Ephesians begins, sums up God's plan of salvation for humanity. The climax is in the centre, 'to bring everything under Christ as head'. Christ is the Wisdom of God, the plan according to which and through which all things were created. Christ is also the completion of the creation, and the unity of all things in Christ is a special emphasis of the whole letter. All things are under Christ as head creation, all nourishment for creation and all guidance of creation. In ancient medical science the head was held to be the source of all these: all nourishment comes through the mouth, the brain thinks things out and makes the decisions on which the whole body acts. Christ performs for creation these functions which the head performs for the body. In earlier letters Paul had written that the Body of Christ which is the Church is made up from many limbs and members, which all have different contributions to make to its wellbeing. Now he develops this image and differentiates Christ as the head of the whole Body as its guide, leader, nourishment and focus.

Is the Body a helpful image for the Church?

“ Christ is the Wisdom of God, the plan according to which and through which all things were created. ”

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

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