

● Sunday 5th June 2016: **TENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: Luke, when he wrote his account of the raising of the widow's son by Jesus (in today's *Gospel*), clearly had in his mind this incident in *1st Kings* which describes Elijah's raising of the widow's son. Jesus is foreshadowed by the great prophet Elijah.

Psalm: if Jesus Christ has ever done anything for you, you can personalise this psalm and use it to praise and thank Him.

Second Reading: St Paul states that he received the Gospel in a supernatural revelation directly from Christ; this revelation was a spiritual and theological understanding, not the historical facts of Jesus such as we find in the Gospels.

Gospel: by this healing miracle (recorded only in *Luke*) Jesus – in His mercy and compassion - ends the woman's weeping and becomes the object of the people's awe and devotion.

● Sunday 12th June 2016: **ELEVENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: King David, after being reprimanded by Nathan the prophet, confesses to his adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and Nathan pronounces absolution.

Psalm: we can take this psalm as King David's psalm of repentance; equally we can pray it ourselves when we have been absolved of our sins in Confession.

Second Reading: Paul introduces his concept of what is known as justification by faith, a central theme in this epistle: in short we can only be made righteous by faith in God's free gift of grace, not by any human merit.

Gospel: the woman anoints Jesus' feet with ointment, tears, and kisses, demonstrating her love for Him, her warmth, and her sense of sorrow and penitence for her sins. By contrast Simon, the Pharisee (who may have had comparatively little to be penitent about) misses the point and misses out on receiving the grace of God.

● Sunday 19th June 2016: **TWELFTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: this prophecy of the forgiveness of the people's guilt for their sin by 'one whom they have pierced' would come true in the death of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

Psalm: do we in fact long for God, as we recite in this psalm? Or in reality do we truly yearn for other things, other idols, other gods?

Second Reading: The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1213 summarises this: 'through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission'.

Gospel: Peter recognises Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ. Christ predicts His own suffering, death, and resurrection. He then calls the disciples to follow Him on the same path, to renounce self and take up the cross 'every day'. Only *Luke* adds this, just as only *Luke* has the same wording in the bread petition of the Lord's Prayer. Conversion to the Way of the Cross is not just a one-off event; we are called to be remade daily in the image of Christ.

● Sunday 26th June 2016: **THIRTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: Elijah the prophet calls Elisha to follow and succeed him. This story is chosen as today's *First Reading* because of the parallel between Elisha's desire to say farewell to his parents first and the desire of the last mentioned disciple in the *Gospel* to do the same.

Psalm: we are confident that God 'will show us the path of life'.

Second Reading: freedom is not freedom to do as one likes (self-indulgence); rather it is freedom to do deeds of love prompted by the Spirit.

Gospel: Jesus and His followers turn towards Jerusalem. For *Luke* this is not so much geographical as theological: the holy city of Jerusalem will be the climax and focal point of Jesus' saving death and resurrection. And the call to follow Christ overrides everything else.

Wednesday (29th June) is a Holy Day of Obligation, the Solemnity of SS Peter & Paul, Apostles. The readings are in the Lectionary Volume I, p979 (Vigil Mass) and p981 (Mass during the day).

● Sunday 3rd July 2016: **FOURTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: Jerusalem, the holy city, is depicted as a mother and as the centre of celebration when the Messiah comes.

Psalm: with joy we praise God for his mighty deeds.

Second Reading: these lines summarise this epistle: the Messiah has come already and begun the new creation, the restoration to perfection which Jewish thought associated with the Messiah's coming.

Gospel: the Lord sends out the seventy-two, to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God. When they return rejoicing, Jesus says that ultimately and in reality the kingdom of God is heaven.

● Sunday 10th July 2016: **FIFTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: Moses lays down the law (literally) which the People of God must obey. It is interpreting this law which gives rise to the lawyer's question in today's *Gospel*.

Psalm: the first psalm (Ps 68) fits in well with today's *Gospel*, with its references to compassion for the poor and needy. The alternative psalm (Ps 18) fits in well with the *First Reading*, with its strictures about obeying God's law willingly and gladly.

Second Reading: a Christological hymn, thought by scholars to be St Paul's correction of a hymn in use at Colossae. It highlights the mediation of Christ, first in creation, then in reconciliation.

Gospel: the parable of mercy we call the parable of the Good Samaritan is one of Jesus' most provocative parables. True compassion leads to helping someone in need; as S Ambrose said, 'Mercy, not kinship, makes someone a neighbour'.

We could read it as Jesus being the good Samaritan. But the Christian community and all individual Christians are also called to be the good Samaritan. Love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbour.

● Sunday 17th July 2016: **SIXTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: Abraham and Sarah are visited by three mysterious strangers, clearly God himself (in the Persons of the Trinity?). This may be a very ancient story, but it still speaks to us powerfully today as it is proclaimed as the *First Reading* at Mass.

Psalm: the response sums up this psalm well: only "*the just will live in the presence of the Lord*". As for those who are unjust,

Second Reading: Paul suffers because he is a member of the body of Christ, but he must struggle on because God has commissioned him to proclaim the mystery of Christ.

Gospel: like the lawyer in the preceding passage, whose lack of understanding provoked the parable of the Good Samaritan, Martha too fails to understand. The important thing, exemplified by Mary, is that the follower of Jesus must above all *listen* to Him. Only in this way will the Christian disciple be able to follow Christ on His way.

● Sunday 24th July 2016: **SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: a remarkable story about God's justice. It is remarkable that the author knows God's inner thoughts! It is remarkable that Abraham feels able to rebuke God! It is remarkable that God listens to him and changes his intentions!

What the story does is first to show that God is a just God, and secondly to show that indiscriminate collective punishment is contrary to justice, because it punishes the innocent.

Psalm: a song of praise to God, who answers our prayer.

Second Reading: Baptism is a dying (to sin) and a rising (to new life in and with Christ).

Gospel: following Mary's good example of listening to Christ comes Jesus' teaching on prayer. First is *Luke's* version of the Lord's Prayer (we use *Matthew's* in the daily liturgy), followed by a sort of parable on petitionary prayer (that is, urgently asking God for things).

A discussion group could focus on what things are the same in both versions in *Luke* and *Matthew*. Or it could consider the differences, and what they teach us.

● Sunday 31st July 2016: **EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: in a famous phrase the Preacher says "*vanity of vanities. All is vanity!*" This could easily be a commentary on today's *Gospel*.

The **Psalm** picks up the same idea as both the *First Reading* and the *Gospel*, that this life is short and soon ended.

Second Reading: St Paul unpacks in practical terms the teaching of today's other Readings: "*let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth*".

Gospel: in answer to a family inheritance dispute Jesus replies with the parable of the rich fool, whose concern for material things made him forget the fragility of life and his obligations towards God.

● Sunday 7th August 2016: **NINETEENTH SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: this passage looks back to the original passover, when God rescued the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Those who put their trust in God will not be disappointed.

Psalm: those who hope and trust in the Lord will be happy.

Second Reading: this looks back to Abraham and his unshakeable faith in God; thus we call him 'our father in faith'.

Gospel: Jesus tells us to be alert and ready for 'the wedding feast', by which He means His second coming. We must be ready for His return at any moment, but we must also allow for a delay. We do not know when Christ will come again.

● Sunday 14th August 2016: **The ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

Vigil (Saturday evening) Mass:

The **First Reading** and **Psalm** liken Mary to the Ark of the Covenant. Just as the wood of the Ark (which carried God inside) was regarded as incorruptible, so too the body of Mary (which carried Jesus Christ inside) was also incorruptible. The **Second Reading** continues this theme: since she bore the Son of God Mary was preserved incorrupt at the end of her life, and so is the first beneficiary of His total victory over death.

Gospel: both a woman in the crowd and Jesus praise His mother.

Mass during the Day:

First Reading: there are many different concepts in this vision of the end-time. One is that the woman is Mary: she is the first church, she bore the head of the church in her womb, she is the first believer, she is the first of the redeemed, and she is the first to follow Christ into glory.

Psalm: a psalm traditionally used on feast days of Our Lady.

Second Reading: Mary is the first of "*those who belong to him*" to be taken up to heaven. She is thus the perfect model of the Christian and of the Church.

Gospel: the story of the Visitation. This is important because it is Mary's motherhood of Jesus Christ which is the reason for her exaltation.

● Sunday 21st August 2016: **TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: not only will God go beyond the Jewish people and gather people in from all the nations, some of these foreigners may even become priests and Levites!

Psalm: people from all the nations will praise God.

Second Reading: our sufferings can be compared to the educational or sports training sons receive from their fathers. It is not always pleasant at the time, but it bears fruit in the end.

Luke reminds us in today's **Gospel** of Jesus' journey up to Jerusalem, the urgency of Jesus' message, and the response it demands. The parable warns that there will be those who are invited but who fail to act in time. They will be replaced by people from other nations.

● Sunday 28th August 2016: **TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

As is usually the case the **First Reading** contains a prefiguring of the *Gospel* message: God wants us to be humble, not proud.

Psalm: in his goodness God is concerned for the poor, not the wealthy or important.

Second Reading: an image of the parousia, the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ.

Gospel: Jesus has a Sabbath meal with a Pharisee and his guests. A Sabbath meal is supposed to be an anticipation of the banquet in the kingdom, but Jesus criticises them for their haughtiness and lack of humility.

● Sunday 4th September 2016: **TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY (Year C)**

Today's Readings

By Fr David Gibbons, Centre for Catholic Formation

First Reading: it is difficult enough to understand earthly things; how much more difficult it is to understand God's ways.

Psalm: a plea for wisdom, for understanding of our condition.

Second Reading: this is the only reading from Paul's letter to Philemon in the entire three year Sunday cycle. Paul returns Onesimus to his owner Philemon, but now that Onesimus is a Christian he is to be a brother rather than a slave. Paul has converted both Onesimus and Philemon to faith in Christ.

Gospel: Christ tells us that discipleship makes demands, so we should not enter into it lightly or without serious thought or planning.