

Readings and Reflections for the Week

Sunday 12 July - FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Reading 1, Isaiah 55:10-11, Psalm 64(65)

Reading 2, Romans 8:18-23,

Gospel, Matthew 13:1-23

A sower went out to sow

Monday 13 July - Feria

Reading 1, Isaiah 1:10-17

Psalm 49(50), Gospel, Matthew 10:34-11:1

It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword

Tuesday 14 July - Feria

Reading 1, Isaiah 7:1-9

Psalm 47(48), Gospel, Matthew 11:20-24

It will not go so hard with Sodom on Judgement Day as with you

Wednesday 15 July - St Bonaventure, Bishop, Doctor

Reading 1, Isaiah 10:5-7,13-16

Psalm 93(94), Gospel, Matthew 11:25-27

You have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little children

Thursday 16 July - Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Reading 1, Isaiah 26:7-9,12, 16-19

Psalm 101(102), Gospel, Matthew 11:28-30

My yoke is easy and my burden light

Friday 17 July - Feria

Reading 1, Isaiah 38:1-6,21-22,7-8

Psalm Isaiah 38:10-12,16, Gospel, Matthew 12:1-8

The Son of Man is master of the sabbath

Saturday 18 July - Blessed Virgin Mary on a Saturday

*10am Confessions, Exposition and Benediction
no Mass*

Reading 1, Micah 2:1-5

Psalm 9B(10), Gospel, Matthew 12:14-21

He cured them all but warned them not to make him known

Sunday 19 July - SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Reading 1, Wisdom 12:13,16-19, Psalm 85(86)

Reading 2, Romans 8:26-27,

Gospel, Matthew 13:24-43

Let them both grow till the harvest

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of South St Albans Churches.

SAINT OF THE WEEK ST Bonaventure

St Bonaventure, birth name John, known as "the seraphic doctor," was born at Bagnoregio, in the Lazio region of central Italy, in 1221. He received the name of Bonaventure in consequence of an exclamation of St Francis of Assisi, when, in response to the pleading of the child's mother, the saint prayed for John's recovery from a dangerous illness, and, foreseeing the future greatness of the little John, cried out "O Buona ventura"-O good fortune!

At the age of 22 St Bonaventure entered the Franciscan Order. Having made his vows, he was sent to Paris to complete his studies under the celebrated doctor Alexander of Hales, an Englishman and a Franciscan. After the latter's death he continued his course under his successor, John of Rochelle. In Paris, he became a good friend of St Thomas Aquinas. He received the degree of Doctor, together with St Thomas Aquinas, ceding to his friend against the latter's inclination, the honour of having it first conferred upon him. Like St Thomas Aquinas, he enjoyed the friendship of the holy King, St Louis.

At the age of 35 he was chosen General of his Order and restored a perfect calm where peace had been disturbed by internal dissensions. He did much for his Order and composed The Life of St Francis. He also assisted at the translation of the relics of St Anthony of Padua. He was nominated Archbishop of York by Pope Clement IV, but he begged not to be forced to accept that dignity. Bonaventure was instrumental in procuring the election of Pope Gregory X, who rewarded him with the title of Cardinal Bishop of Albano one of the six suffragan Sees of Rome. Gregory X insisted on his presence at the great Second Council of Lyon in 1274. There, after his significant contributions led to a union of the Greek and Latin churches, Bonaventure died suddenly and under suspicious circumstances.

Prayer to St Bonaventure

Dear Lord, I bring this prayer to you through the intercession of St Bonaventure, patron of bowel disorders. I ask for your healing touch upon my body to relieve this pain. Bring me relief and help my body return to health. Amen.

REFLECTIONS

Taken from The Wednesday Word {www.wednesdayword.org}

Gospel, Matthew 13:1-23

Like any good teacher, Jesus uses pictures – or parables. Ever heard the one about the elephant and the wasp? Or electricity like a toy train going round a room? Anyway, for the next three weeks we have some of these pictures, to show us what Jesus is trying to do. This first one is rather sad. Whatever the sower does seems to fail: seed pecked up by birds, scorched by the sun, choked by thistles. What are my pecking birds, my scorching sun, my choking thistles which annihilate the seed Jesus sows in me? It's probably different for every one of us. But some, just a little, of the seed bears a fantastic harvest. There must be something I can show to the Lord with pride and gratitude: 'Look, this is the seed you gave me; it has grown, developed, and here is your harvest.' Jesus, too, reflected on his mission to establish his Father's sovereignty on earth. Jesus, too, may well have wondered if he was getting anywhere. It was only when he had failed utterly, alone, deserted and tortured, that his perseverance won the crown. Jesus doesn't want the successful. He wants the failures as his followers – and that is where the harvest lies. In Jesus' story what is the seed?

What prevents the seed reaching its full growth in me? In what way has the seed made me a better person?

First Reading, Isaiah 55:10-11

This poetic passage from Isaiah about the word of God may be understood on two levels. On one level it prepares for Jesus' parable in the Gospel reading about the sower and the seed. But while Isaiah stresses the effectiveness of the word of God, Jesus reflects on the failure of his word with many sections of his hearers, as well as on the brilliant success of his word in those who bear fruit 'thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold'. On another level this passage prepares us for the meditation on the Word of God in the prologue to the Gospel of John: 'In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God and the Word was God.' This helps to explain just how God, the awesome and inexpressible, can be manifested and active in creation. In Genesis God created by his Word ('Let there be light!' 'Let there be a vault! etc.), so the Word is seen not as something separate from and independent of God, but as the concrete expression of God's will, the manifestation of divine power. The Word which comes forth from God's mouth and does not return unfulfilled is, on this level, the creative power of God, unstoppably fulfilling the will of God in the world.

How is God's Word at work in creation?

Second Reading, Romans 8:18-23,

In our reading of Romans 8 on life in the Spirit of the Risen Christ we have missed out a few crucial verses (they are used on a separate occasion) on our adoption as sons, enabling us – both men and women – to call God 'Abba', 'Father'. This intimate Aramaic family name, used by Jesus to his Father in his agonized prayer in the Garden (Mark 14:36), can be used by all his followers who share his life. With Jesus we are heirs of God, sharing his inheritance. Not only ourselves, however, but the whole of creation is renewed and re-created by the Spirit. It all takes on a new dimension and a new life, groaning in the Spirit to be released from frustration. This is a new reason for human beings (now renewed in Christ) to care for God's creation. In the first place we were created in the image of God to further and to complete his creation. Now, re-created as adopted sons and heirs of God, our responsibility is increased and intensified. As yet, we have only the first-fruits of the Spirit, but first-fruits make sense and have their value only in view of the fullness and completion of the harvest.

What is our responsibility as heirs of God?