

Commentary on Sunday Scripture – Year C

7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

First reading:

(1 Samuel 26.2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-25)

David spares Saul

This delightful story of David occurs when Saul is pursuing the young David in the wilderness of Judah, above the Dead Sea. The successful young warrior was getting too ambitious for the liking of King Saul, who, in a bad mood, tried to pin him to the wall with a spear, and then threw him out of court. David then gathered a band of outlaws, and Saul attempted to hunt him down. The result was this story.

Was David magnanimous, or was he already thinking that one day he, in his turn, would be the Lord's anointed? The assassination of the king would be a bad precedent!

David was a fantastic leader, the sort of person whom anyone would follow anywhere. He was also a great sinner, committing adultery and murdering the cuckolded husband to make his own guilt seem less. But he was a great penitent too, a lovable and very human figure. Above all, he was the real founder of the Israelite monarchy and of the 'line of David' from which Jesus would come. To him were the promises made that God would be a father to the Son who would reign for ever on his throne.

Question:

Was David calculating or generous?

Second reading:

(1 Corinthians 15.45-49)

Transformation in the Resurrection

This is the third of the four Sundays on which Paul is explaining the meaning of the Resurrection of Christians. The Resurrection of Christians follows the model of Jesus' own Resurrection. As the firstborn from the dead, Christ is the founder of the new humanity, just as Adam is the founder of fallen humanity. 'Adam' means 'man', and the story of the Fall in the Book of Genesis is not so much a story of an event long ago as the story of every human temptation and sin.

However, the obedience of Christ, the Second Adam, undoes the disobedience of the First Adam. Just before this passage, Paul has explained that in the Resurrection we will all be changed, and transformed into the heavenly sphere, in the image of the Risen Christ. What was weak will be strong with the strength of God, what was corruptible will be incorruptible with the incorruptibility of God, what was contemptible will be glorious with the glory of God.

He refuses to say what sort of bodies we will have, but he sums up the other changes by saying that whereas the life principle was the soul, in the Resurrection it will be the Spirit of God.

Question:

What does the Resurrection of the body mean in the light of this teaching?

Commentary on Sunday Scripture – Year C

Gospel:

(Luke 6.27-38)

Unlimited Love

Luke's version of the Beatitudes, which formed last Sunday's reading, puts the emphasis not on Christian attitudes, as Matthew's version does, but on the blessing on those in real, dire need.

Now he continues this with our duty to respond to those in need, even if they are hostile, even if they hate us. There must be no calculation whether we will get back money or property lent, no limit to how much we lend or give. At first it seems as if Luke is concerned only with money, and indeed he is so concerned, for he is always warning of the danger of possessions and the need to use them for those who have none.

Luke is proclaiming Christ's Good News to a more affluent society than do Mark and Matthew, and places all the more emphasis on the danger of wealth. But, after dealing with money, Luke goes on to other acts of generosity. We must not judge, but must forgive in order to obtain forgiveness. Most of all, we must be compassionate. Whereas Matthew ends his instructions here with the general, 'Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect', Luke focuses on compassion, 'Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate.' It is an affair of the heart: we must be emotionally involved with those in need.

Question:

Which is the more important, compassion or generosity?
