

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – C

The gospel reading continues with Jesus' teaching following on from the Beatitudes 'love your enemies and do good.' The reading concludes urging us to be compassionate and not to judge or condemn but to grant pardon and then 'there will be gifts for you.' In the first reading we hear how David carries out the gospel teaching showing mercy to Saul, God's anointed. In the second reading Paul contrasts our likeness to the first Adam with our likeness to the second Adam, Christ.

The **First Reading** is from the first book of Samuel one of the historical books. Israel is now settling in the Promised Land with each tribe running its own affairs. When the Philistines invade the land, through the present day Gaza strip, the tribes of Israel of necessity come together under monarchical government with Saul as their first king. He is not successful (see 1Sam. ch13-15) which leads the way to David's anointing as king. Saul continues as king with David fighting many battles for him until his death recorded at the end of the first book of Samuel. In the second book of Samuel there are two accounts of David being anointed, the first as king of Judah (2Sam. 2.4), the second as king of Israel, the northern kingdom (2Sam. 5.3).

The reading, 26.2,7-9,12-13,22-23, tells us how Abishai and David approach the camp of Saul at night while all are asleep in their tents. Abishai wants to pin Saul to the ground with Saul's own spear, 'Just one stroke! I will not need to strike him twice.' But David will not hear of it 'for who can lift his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt?' The reading goes on to tell how David makes clear to Saul that he, David, has spared Saul when David had him in his power.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 102.1-4,8,10,12-13, is a psalm proclaiming that God is love so we should praise him for his kindness, his forgiveness, for his tenderness in redeeming us. He does not treat us as we deserve but removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

The **Second Reading** is from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul evangelised the church at Corinth between A.D. 50 and 52. His policy was to establish the Christian faith in a centre of population, and here he chose the great and populous port of Corinth, so that the faith could spread to the whole of the province of Achaia. The Christian community grew strong composed mainly of poor people, but Corinth was a centre of Greek life, philosophy and religions. It was also a notorious centre of immorality which was to cause problems for the newly converted. In 1 Corinthians Paul addresses urgent problems that faced the church there and the decisions that had to be made to address these problems such as moral conduct, marriage and virginity, liturgical and Eucharistic meetings, charisms, matters concerning the Church and the world, appeals to civil courts, eating foods sacrificed to idols. Paul's religious genius enabled him to use all these problems as a vehicle to expound the profound doctrines of Christian liberty, the sanctification of the body, the supremacy of love, union with Christ. Paul teaches the Corinthians that there is only one master, Christ, and only one message, the cross which is the one true wisdom.

The reading is 15.45-49. The sentence before our reading begins states, 'If there is a natural body there is a spiritual body too' which gives a good idea about Paul's teaching in the reading. Paul begins speaking about Adam 'the first man' who became a living soul subject to decay and corruption whereas the last Adam, Christ, 'has become a life-giving spirit' which knows nothing of decay and corruption. The first is of the earth the second is from heaven. Paul concludes saying, 'we who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man' in the sense that we must model ourselves on the heavenly man if we wish to live with Christ in heaven. This is a continuation of Paul's teaching on the resurrection.