

Weekly Lectionary Guide

Dates and Readings	Commentaries on the Readings <i>(for the Saints, Fasting etc. see the fortnightly distributed Calendar Sheet)</i>	Extra Notes Questions and Reflections
<p>Sunday of the Ten Lepers 17th January</p> <p>1 Timothy 4:9-15</p> <p>Luke 17:12-19</p>	<p>(AR): St Paul's exhortation to his spiritual son, St Timothy, who is now, by his appointment, bishop of Ephesus, includes the instruction to the whole Church that no one should despise his youth (v.11). As an office holder in the Church, he suffers no impediment by virtue of his age.</p> <p>(GR): Our healing in Christ is not complete until the relationship with our Lord is renewed or deepened. That relationship is most clearly authenticated in a spirit of gratitude and worship.</p>	<p>AR: Children and youth are not the "Church of tomorrow" they are, with everyone else, the Church of today. They do not have to wait until they become middle aged and possibly "safe" to serve God. The Church needs their vigour and idealism so we should always be actively discerning the vocations of younger men for the diaconate and priesthood.</p> <p>GR: All the miracles we hope for from the Lord are not simply a wish list that we would have Him fulfil, but rather a means for us to draw closer to Him.</p>
<p>Monday 18th January</p> <p>Hebrews 11:17-31</p> <p>Mark 9:42-10:1</p>	<p>(AR): As St Paul continues in his list of those who lived by faith and were therefore pleasing to God in the Old Covenants, we are strongly reminded as we follow his historical litany that God's promises to us and our children are realised by faith, a faith that is manifest in actions of trust.</p> <p>(GR): Jesus often teaches with hyperbole where He wants His words to have greater impact. Hyperbole uses exaggeration and is not usually to be taken literally. However, this exaggeration forces upon us the importance and depth of what He is saying to us.</p>	<p>AR: What does living by faith mean? It means living each day as if everything depends on God (which it does), while at the same time, living out the condition of His promises that blessings only flow when we dedicate all of ourselves and our lives in His service.</p> <p>GR: Much of Christ's hyperbolic teaching concerns personal asceticism. Greater impact is conferred by shock tactics because sometimes this is just what we need to jolt us into the action of controlling our actions and desires.</p>
<p>Tuesday 19th January</p> <p>Hebrews 12:25-27; 13:22-25</p> <p>Mark 10:2-12</p>	<p>(AR): God's words sometimes shake us up and that is a good thing.</p> <p>(GR): Our Lord's teaching concerning divorce moves our attention away from what the law considers possible as an allowance for human weakness and towards the full implication of a married couple becoming "one flesh" (v.8)</p>	<p>AR: If the Lord is sometimes a little rough with us it is because we are endangering ourselves or others by wandering off the true path. Let us attend to these divine warnings with all due diligence.</p> <p>GR: In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus allows an exception to this teaching, the so-called "Matthean exception" for <i>porneia</i>, literally fornication, probably in context, adultery.</p>
<p>Wednesday 20th January</p> <p>James 1:1-18</p> <p>Mark 10:11-16</p>	<p>(AR): In verses 2-4, St James enjoins steadfastness in trials as being the mother of all virtues. Without such robust perseverance the Christian work will never be completed.</p> <p>(GR): Christ's blessing of the little children is a warning to adults that they can so easily lose the simplicity and trust of a child in the exercise of a mature faith.</p>	<p>AR: Our ability to endure and prevail is made possible beyond expectation by divine grace; but this is something we should seek with all our hearts. God will not disappoint us.</p> <p>GR: By all means we should be well-informed about the Faith and commit ourselves to it, but this is no substitute for deepening a trusting relationship with Christ which sustains everything.</p>
<p>Thursday 21st January</p> <p>James 1:19-27</p>	<p>(AR): The famous reference in v.22: "be doers of the word" reminds us that actions count when we consider faith.</p>	<p>AR: In the witness of Scripture, the Fathers and the Saints, faith is not something that we "have" but rather something that we "do". We "faith" God to</p>

<p>Mark 10:17-27</p>	<p>(GR): The incident of the rich young man who cannot follow Christ because he will not lay aside his possessions is a strong warning to all of us that nothing must come between ourselves and the Lord.</p>	<p>do something, not merely have theoretical thoughts about the possibility or otherwise of Him doing them.</p> <p>GR: It is said in the gospel that Jesus looked upon him with love (v.21). We can be sure that this love did not change when the young man walked away sorrowful, but Jesus honoured his choice. Likewise, He will honour ours, so we must make our own choices wisely.</p>
<p>Friday 22nd January</p> <p>James 2:1-13</p> <p>Mark 10:24-32</p>	<p>(AR): St James warns against partiality in preferencing the interests and needs of the wealthier members over the poorer ones. God shows no partiality, neither should we.</p> <p>(GR): Jesus teaches that it is not impossible for rich men to enter into the Kingdom of God, for with God all things are possible (v.27). Nonetheless, worldly attachments can prove to be tenacious obstacles to discipleship and salvation.</p>	<p>AR: People often say: “money buys influence”. With Christians it is a currency that buys absolutely nothing. Any gifts into the Church’s Treasury that come with an expectation should be politely refused and returned.</p> <p>GR: We should ask ourselves what we prize most in our lives and then ask: “how easily could I set this aside for the sake of the gospel?”. How we answer that question can be a trigger for strengthening our walk with Christ.</p>
<p>Saturday 23rd January</p> <p>Colossians 1:1-6</p> <p>Mark 16:10-15</p>	<p>(AR): In his greeting to the Church at Colossae, St Paul refers to the gospel bearing fruit in the whole world. This is astonishing that even after only one generation from the resurrection of Christ, most of the Roman Empire around the Mediterranean had thriving Christian communities, and inland as far as Gaul, Alpine Europe, Asia Minor, the Middle East and North Africa.</p> <p>(GR): The longer end of St Mark’s gospel (verses 9-20) summarises the Resurrection appearances that we find in the other gospels and adds the Ascension at the end. This final section is not present in some manuscripts and whereas the longer ending is canonical Scripture, the final verse in the variant manuscripts is powerful and dynamic (“for they were afraid”).</p>	<p>AR: We need to expect greater things from God in terms of Christian mission in our own day. With much more effective tools of communication at our disposal, we can and should be doing much more to reach the world for Christ. This means more labourers in the harvest and much more realistic Christian giving to sustain the work of evangelism. The Orthodox Church should be leading from the front in this activity, not as in so many places trailing at the back.</p> <p>GR: We must not domesticate the gospel so that we deprive it of the power to shock, reorientate and energise our lives.</p>