

INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS

The 1st reading is Isaiah and is another part of the Servant message

Psalms 40 is about thanksgiving and joy in partnership, it's not the whole psalm

The 2nd reading is The beginning of the Corinthians Letter

The Gospel: John continues to explain about Jesus

THE FIRST READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'

And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him — for I am honoured in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength — he says: 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

The word of the Lord

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

I waited, I waited for the LORD,

and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry.

He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

You delight not in sacrifice and offering,

but in an open ear.

You do not ask for holocaust and sin offering.

Then I said, 'Behold, I have come.'

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

In the scroll of the book it stands written of me:

'I delight to do your will, O my God;

your instruction lies deep within me.'

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

Your uprightness I have proclaimed

in the great assembly.

My lips I have not sealed;

you know it, O LORD.

Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE FIRST LETTER
TO THE CORINTHIANS

Paul, called by the will of God to be an Apostle of Christ Jesus,
and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth,
to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all
those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

The word of the Lord

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us;

to all who did receive him,

he gave the authority to become children of God.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING
TO JOHN

At that time:

John saw Jesus coming towards him, and said,

‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.”

I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptising with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.’

And John bore witness: ‘I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptise with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit.”

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.’

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

THE REFLECTION

St Paul's letter to the Corinthians is important and easier to read if you realise his letter is a reply to questions. This is a very diverse group and he has to sort out some issues to maintain unity between the Jewish Christians and the non-Jewish Christians. There are many difficulties and Paul wants to make the Christian message simple and accessible to all. Recognising the Spirit will help those who want to believe in his first 4 chapters he wants to emphasise this.

Then there are many lasting answers: chapters 5-7 are about sexual behaviour. What about sexual activity? Paul wants to keep the Jewish family values. Chapter 6 condemns sexual immorality and the unnatural practice of same sex activity which happened in Greek communities and at Pagan orgies. There are issues about translation in these texts, and it is about self-indulgent activity not love. Chapter 13 is on real love.

Chapter 7 is on sex, Marriage and the single life is good, the single life can be more easily focussed on faith and good practice Men and women have conjugal rights over each other's bodies demanding fidelity but also respect. He develops this in his letter to the Ephesians. Couples can separate but shouldn't divorce, he had a duty to maintain care for his wife even if they are separated. A separated divorced person who became a Christian can marry a Christian, if their ex doesn't mind, a privilege still in use today.

Can you eat anything? It is better not to eat meat sacrificed in pagan temples, it can be confused with taking part in Pagan worship, an American butcher recognised the layout of butchers' shops beside pagan temples in Pompeii. Taking part in pagan events can lead you to idolatry so avoid them.

What about worship Chapter 11 on good behaviour at mass, 12 and on non-necessary gifts of the Spirit, they are to benefit everyone, and we each have our own.

What's the evidence of the resurrection? Read it and you'll see.