

# Read



Numbers 11:25-29

Psalm 19:8, 10,  
12-13, 14

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 30, 2018



#### REFLECTION

Jealousy can get the best of us at times. It can become all-consuming and ruin a day, a month, or even a year! Whether it is because of a relationship or comparing yourself to another classmate, jealousy is debilitating. Sometimes it is very difficult to let jealousy go if we think we can't trust the other person. Both Jesus and Moses struggle with this in their respective communities. Jesus even goes so far as to say, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off" (Mark 9:43). Taken literally, this action would be excruciatingly painful and very dangerous. Yet the warning is very clear. If you are so consumed by sin (jealousy), then you must do something to move past it because wallowing in it will bring about destruction. Lift up the temptation toward jealousy in prayer. Ask for God's grace to help you move toward releasing its ugly grip so that you can love freely again.



#### QUESTIONS

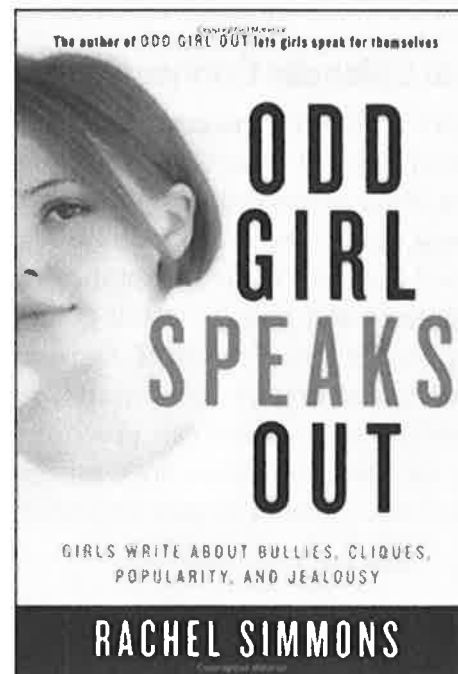
- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What strong emotion tends to lead you away from God?
- ❖ What triggers this emotion? What would help you to overcome its grip?



#### ACTION

Our spiritual, mental, physical, social, and emotional health is integral to combatting the tendency to sin. This week, focus on your holistic self. Where might you need some healing in these five areas? What do you need to focus on in order to balance yourself so that you can manage strong emotions such as jealousy? For some of us this means physical exercise for at least thirty minutes a day. For others it means fifteen minutes of meditation or prayer. For more significant emotions that may linger for too long, others may seek out a spiritual director or mental health counselor. Any of these options will help to dissipate the temptation to get stuck in the blame game and help bring us closer to Jesus. May we all enter the Kingdom of God with both eyes intact!

Read this book on bullying:





September 30, 2018

# TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #137B

Numbers 11:25-29

Psalm 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

In this Sunday's Gospel, we are reminded that we cannot let anything get in the way of doing the work of God. Everything in our life that proves to be an impediment must be forcibly removed. There are many potential obstacles in the lives of teens. Help them to identify these obstacles and figure out how to remove them from their lives.

**Q FOCUS:** *To do everything in Jesus' name.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Anyone with a pet will remember the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi is October 4! While this popular saint is often associated with animals and the environment, there is so much more to his legacy. Pope Francis chose his name so that the saint's values of simplicity and poverty would guide him in rebuilding the Church. Francis of Assisi lived the Gospel of Jesus as literally as he could, started a religious order, and tried to create peace during the Crusades. He loved the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. There's a lot to inspire anyone!

### Church Teaching Connection

"The Scriptural expression 'heaven and earth' means all that exists, creation in its entirety. It also indicates the bond, deep within creation, that both unites heaven and earth and distinguishes one from the other: 'the earth' is the world of [humanity], while 'heaven' or 'the heavens' can designate both the firmament and God's own 'place' . . . and consequently the 'heaven' too which is eschatological glory. Finally, 'heaven' refers to the saints and the 'place' of the spiritual creatures, the angels, who surround God" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 326; referencing St. Augustine, En. in Ps. 103, I, 15: PL 37, 1348).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Mark 9:38 - 43, 45, 47-48

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of

water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

In today's Gospel, the Apostles are concerned that there are others who are healing in Jesus' name and are not part of their company. Jesus tells John that anyone who performs a miracle in his name is on his side.

- ▶ Do you agree with Jesus' statement?
- ▶ Are there any people today who do things in Jesus' name but aren't really his followers?

Jesus says that anyone who performs a “mighty deed” in his name cannot at the same time speak ill of him.

- ▶ How do you think Jesus would define a “mighty deed”?

Jesus tells the disciples that anyone who is for them cannot be against them. This might sound obvious,

but Jesus' words challenge the disciples. They thought that they were the only ones serving Jesus. They weren't ready to share that role.

- ▶ Have you ever shared a mission or worked on a project with someone who was really different from you?
- ▶ What challenges did you encounter?
- ▶ How do you see this dynamic at work in our parish?
- ▶ Are there any people who you feel really different from?
- ▶ How about in our Church as a whole?
- ▶ How do we share a mission with people who otherwise don't have much in common with us?

Jesus doesn't tell us how to share our mission in this Sunday's Gospel, but he does tell us in no uncertain terms that we had better not let anything get in the way of doing God's work.

- ▶ What kind of language does Jesus use to tell us this?
- ▶ Why do you think he uses such strong words?
- ▶ How do you understand what Jesus says about entering into Gehenna?
- ▶ How is this fate to be avoided?

Jesus says he wants everyone to join in doing God's work, so everyone has the chance to be a part of God's Kingdom. Sometimes people want their group to include only certain people and exclude others they feel don't belong. In the first part of the Gospel, the disciples feel like they are the only ones who should be allowed to be called followers of Jesus and have all the privileges that come with it. But Jesus teaches them an important lesson. He tells John that anyone who does a good deed in the name of Jesus can be called one of his followers.

This is great news for us! It tells us that when we act in the name of Jesus we can call ourselves his followers.

- ▶ What are some ordinary things you can do to live like Jesus taught us to live?

In the Apostles' Creed we profess to believe that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. In the

Nicene Creed, we say that God created all that is visible and invisible.

► So, what is heaven? What is hell?

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus speaks of hell as "Gehenna." Scholars believe that in Jesus' time, Gehenna was a valley south of Jerusalem. It was believed to be the place where Israelites worshiped a false idol by sacrificing children to him. As a result, this place was considered to be a place of great sin by the Jews of Jesus' time, and so they may have used its name as a synonym for hell. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that heaven is God's place, and is nothing like the world we live in. We await being in the presence of God in heaven after we die. Hell is the opposite of heaven. It is the absence of God forever. When we sin and fail to repent, we make the choice to separate ourselves from God.

► What questions do you have about salvation, heaven, or hell?

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 38.*

**What have you done with your hands or your feet that did not serve the Lord this week?**

**Do your TV or internet habits stand in the way of holiness?**

# Act on the Word

## Images of Heaven

*You may want paper and drawing materials for this activity.*

We don't know what heaven will look like, or what happens there. We only know two things about heaven for sure. We know that being in heaven means being close to God, and we know that life in heaven is nothing like life on earth. In heaven we live a life of love with God who is love. Invite the teens to spend a few minutes thinking about how they imagine heaven, either in silent contemplation or in conversation with one another. Encourage them to think beyond images of clouds and angels playing harps in order to really delve into what heaven might mean. Then, invite each teen to create a depiction of his or her concept of heaven. The teens might use paper and coloring materials to illustrate their ideas about heaven, or they might pick poems, favorite Scripture verses, or songs that speak to them of heaven. Invite each teen to share his or her vision of heaven with the rest of the group. Once everyone has shared, talk about any noticeable similarities or differences.

## Closing Prayer

*God of all peace and every consolation,  
you created a world of great diversity  
and gave humanity the gift of free will.*

*Help us to determine what is right and good  
for the benefit of all creation.*

*May we learn to respect and honor those who do  
not follow Christ*

*yet pursue your will in hidden ways.*

*Through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*