

Read

Jeremiah 20:7-9

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6,
8-9

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 16:21-27

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 30, 2020



REFLECTION

All of us suffer at one time or another during our lives. We face many challenges, personally and as a community. Someone else's sufferings may not seem like such a huge challenge to another person, but each experience is valid and could cause damage to someone's emotional and even physical well-being. These human emotions and feelings are not often talked about, but that doesn't mean they aren't important to identify. The more we name what causes our pain, the more we are encouraging ourselves to change the pain into an act of recognition and solidarity with one another. In today's Gospel passage, Jesus tells us to carry our crosses. We are not being called to bear our pain in silence; rather, we have an opportunity to join our suffering with Christ's suffering. He can help us to overcome them, through his triumph over sin and death in the Resurrection.



ACTION

Sometimes it is easy to be too caught up in your own pain and suffering to realize that others might be struggling with similar challenges or have burdens of their own. This week, set aside ten minutes of prayer each day to reflect on your burdens, other people's burdens, and the love of God. Use the following order to structure your prayer time. First, thank God for the gift he has given in your life and the life of the world. Then review your day and identify the burdens you carry with you. Place them in God's care, knowing that his love surpasses our struggles and pain. Next, pray for those you interacted with that day—you may not know what their burdens are, or even their name, but everyone faces some type of challenge. Ask God to bless them and ease their burdens through his love and presence. Finally, conclude your prayer by reading this week's Gospel.



"Burden"—Foy Vance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9OYW4JBWXI>



? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What prevents you from talking with others about the burdens you carry? Is there a trusted friend or adult you can share your burden with?
- ❖ How you can help others who have their own cross to carry?



August 30, 2020

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #124A

Jeremiah 20:7-9

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 16:21-27

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 today's Gospel passage, Peter is in denial about the forthcoming suffering and death of Jesus. Jesus reprimands Peter and he uses it as a teaching moment. We must be willing to follow God's will and path for us throughout our lives, even if it is difficult or we think we know better than God does. We have the tendency to think that we are in charge and have no need for God in our lives. Jesus reminds his disciples that following him comes with struggle and difficulty. But we must remember that it also come with the joy and peace of God's presence.

Q FOCUS: *We share in the burden of the cross, but we also share in the joy of the Resurrection.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week on September 3, we celebrate St. Gregory the Great, who served as pope from 590 to 604. Throughout his pontificate, he emphasized the important pastoral role bishops and priests have in spiritually guiding the faithful. He also advocated for and enacted many charitable works for those who were poor, sick, or refugees. Gregory also worked to reform parts of the liturgy. He is a Doctor of the Church.

Church Teaching Connection

"There are not two paths, but only one: the one trodden by the Master. The disciple cannot invent a different way. Jesus walks ahead of his followers and asks each one to do as he himself has done. He says: I have not come to be served, but to serve; so, whoever wants to be like me must be the servant of everyone. . . . In other words, Jesus asks that we courageously choose the same path. We have to choose it from our hearts, because external situations do not depend on us" (St. John Paul II, Message of the Holy Father to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the XVI World Youth Day, 3).

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

Matthew 16:21-27

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle

to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”

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:

We experience so many things throughout our lifetime. Many of these experiences we welcome, but some experiences we would rather do without. Very often, we don’t know when these negative experiences will happen. In today’s Gospel, Jesus warns the disciples that there will be very challenging times ahead, as he tells them about the suffering he will endure. Peter is in denial; he does not want anything bad to happen to Jesus, and so he cannot accept that Jesus will suffer and die.

► **Have you ever received news that you could not or would not accept? How did you deal with this difficult news?**

Jesus calls Peter “Satan,” which seems like a harsh comment, especially for Jesus. But Jesus uses this to underline the importance of his obedience to God’s

will. He wants the disciples to understand that fighting against God’s will and God’s plan for one’s life can lead one into a life of sin and inauthenticity. God has laid out the path before Jesus. Yes, it is a difficult, painful, dark path, but the path also leads to the resurrection—for Jesus and for all of us. Jesus knows that God’s plan of salvation is for the good of humanity. Even in the face of suffering, Jesus can praise God and follow his will. Jesus wants his disciples, and especially Peter, to recognize that we must often accept the path that God has set before us. We each have unique gifts and talents to do so much good in the world, and God creates a path for us to utilize these gifts and talents in our home, school, church and wider community.

► **When have you resisted against something that God was leading you toward? What was the outcome of this situation?**

Jesus shows the disciples that to fight God’s will is to put the human will and desires above God’s. The First Commandment states that we must love God above all other things, including our own desires and our own wills. Though this is extremely difficult, we are challenged to integrate this way of thinking into our own lives and experiences. We can ask God to transform our desires so that they match his for our lives and for the salvation of the world. This is part of taking up our crosses, as Jesus exhorts us to do in the Gospel. When we carry our crosses, we recognize the reality of suffering in our world and acknowledge that Jesus is the one who heals it. Jesus endured pain and suffering in his life, yet he triumphed over all of this through his Resurrection. We can share the burdens of our suffering with Jesus and know that we will also share in his triumph and eternal life.

► **How has God transformed an experience of suffering in your life into an opportunity to share his goodness and love with others?**

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 18.

We must move beyond our initial reaction to bad news and look at it through the eyes of Christ.

What does it mean for you to follow Jesus? Have you had to make sacrifices or struggled to do so?

We share our burdens with Jesus. We also share in his triumph over sin and death, and the promise of eternal life.

Act on the Word

Following Christ and Carrying Our Crosses

You will need blank sheets of 8½" x 11" colored paper, scissors, glue, and pens or markers.

Instruct the young people to cut out a cross about the size of the paper. Have them write their names on one side of the cross. Then invite the teens to take several minutes to reflect on what the crosses are that they carry. What difficulties or struggles have they encountered in their life (learning disabilities, divorce in the family, illness, death of a loved one, etc.). Some may be seen or unseen, voiced or kept silent. Help the students understand that even though it is very challenging to name these struggles, it is an important part of entrusting them to God's care. After allowing for reflection time, have the young people write the word or words or draw images to represent that struggle on the horizontal bar of the cross on the blank side. Assemble a prayer table with a Bible, candle, and add other crosses/

crucifixes to the table. With quiet music playing, invite the students one by one to process to the prayer table and place their cross face down on the table. Lead the students in prayer, focusing on entrusting our struggles to God.

After your prayer, have the teens take up their crosses from the table. Give each person another piece of colored paper and have them cut out footprints or shoe prints to paste over their struggles. On each footprint, the teens are to write or draw a picture representing how they can follow Jesus (for example, serve a local soup kitchen, help around the house without being asked, be kind to their siblings). Encourage the students to focus on these actions rather than becoming overwhelmed by their struggles.

Finally, have them each choose a verse from today's Gospel passage to write on the remaining blank space of the vertical bar of the cross.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you teach us to take up our cross and follow.
Help us to recognize the crosses in our daily lives,
and instead of stumbling over them,
take them up with courage and follow
after you.
You who live and reign with the Father and
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.