

Read

Isaiah 50:4c-9a

Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4,
5-6, 8-9

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 16, 2018



REFLECTION

Have you ever felt like you needed to prove yourself to the world? Or prove that your faith does matter to you even if others do not know it? Isaiah's words today are urgent and almost aggressive, "I have set my face like flint, / knowing that I shall not be put to shame. . . . Who disputes my right? / Let that man confront me" (Isaiah 50:7cd, 8de). This author of Isaiah has strong faith, a faith that wills others to challenge it. Some of us may have a hard time living with such strong convictions and might feel like the disciples in today's Gospel. Peter is afraid to live his faith out loud and he challenges Jesus. Yet, Jesus reminds Peter and all the disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). This is a tall order for many of us, especially since we are just getting to know who we are and finding our feet as believers. With God's help and daily prayer, may all of us seek stronger footing to live our faith out loud.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Where did you struggle in your journey today? For what are you grateful?
- ❖ Where was God in each of these experiences?



ACTION

This week, spend some time reflecting upon how you are a cheerleader for your faith. Spend some time journaling about your experiences. Write about a daily struggle and something for which you are grateful. Then ask yourself and reflect on the question, "Where was God in each of these experiences today?" The depth of discovery will give you stronger feet on which to stand.





September 16, 2018

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #131B

Isaiah 50:4c-9a

Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

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, Jesus inquires of his disciples who people say he is. His second question is personal. He wants to know who the disciples say he is. Peter's affirmation of him as the Christ leads to a warning not to let on to others about his identity, a prediction of his passion, and an instruction to the disciples to take up their cross and follow Jesus.

Q **FOCUS:** *To take up our cross with faith in God.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

September 20 is the Memorial of the Korean Martyrs. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, approximately eight thousand adherents to the Catholic faith in Korea were martyred; 103 of them were canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1984. The canonized martyrs were victims of a particularly heinous series of persecutions happening between 1839 and 1867. During this time, Korea was ruled by an anti-Christian dynasty that did everything possible to eliminate Catholic ideology and influence, including maliciously murdering Christian missionaries and their followers. Two of the more notable martyrs are St. Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn, priest and martyr; and St. Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, a layman, both of whom were dedicated to the revitalization of the Church in Korea.

Church Teaching Connection

"Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing else than the culmination of the way he lived his entire life. Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world. But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 269).

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 8:27-35

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.

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "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 and that of the gospel will save it."

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:

► How would you answer if Jesus asked you, "Who do you say I am?" Would you feel confident in your answer?

► How does Peter answer this question in this Sunday's Gospel? Does Peter seem sure of his answer?

Peter seems sure of his answer in the moment, but after just a few minutes he shows through his actions that he might not really be ready to accept the totality of who Jesus is. Peter is ready to believe that the Messiah has come and is in his midst, but he can't accept that Jesus will suffer rejection and death.

► What does Jesus say in response to Peter's refusal to accept this?

Jesus says, "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." On some level, it might seem kind of unfair for Jesus to say this. After all, Peter is

a human being! You can hardly fault him for thinking like one! This is just one more reminder that following Jesus means going above and beyond all expectations. Following Jesus means accepting things that are hard for us to accept, and going beyond human understanding to think like God thinks. Think back to what you said you'd answer if Jesus asked you, "Who do you say I am?"

► Are you really ready to accept everything that your answer calls you to accept, or are there some things that you are struggling to accept?

► What do you think Jesus means when he says that those who wish to save their lives will lose them, but those who are willing to lose their lives will be saved?

As Catholics, we consider mercy to be a virtue. In order to help us practice this virtue, we have identified some actions, which we call the corporal works of mercy and the spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works of mercy help us serve the physical needs of others. These include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, burying the dead, and being good stewards of creation. The spiritual works of mercy help us serve the emotional or spiritual needs of others. These include instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offenses willingly, comforting the afflicted, and praying for the living and the dead.

We often hear that actions speak louder than words. (The youth minister, catechist, or teacher should write each of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy on the board, flip chart, or prepare a handout for teens). Ask teens to choose one corporal act of mercy and one spiritual act of mercy to reflect upon.

► How can you do better to act on these acts of mercy in your life?

► How are these acts of mercy connected to the Cross of Jesus?

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 30.

When have you made choices that caused you to fail to live by God's standards?

What cross are you called to take up?

Act on the Word

Who Do You Say I Am?

You will need paper or journals and writing materials to lead this activity.

Invite the teens to take some quiet time to journal about how they would answer Jesus' question to the Apostles in today's Gospel: "Who do you say I am?" Where do they find the presence of Jesus in their lives? Are there people whose actions or words show them something new about who Jesus is? Then ask them to reflect a little bit on who they are. How does Jesus' identity make them who they are? How do the people in their lives who teach them about Jesus make them who they are? In the Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples to take up their crosses. How do the crosses in the teens' lives make them who they are? Conclude your time of journaling by inviting any teens who feel like it to share some of what they thought about or to pose additional questions for the group to ponder.

Who Am I?

You will need paper and coloring materials to lead this activity.

Distribute paper and coloring materials, and invite the teens to think a bit more about Jesus' identity. Who do they think Jesus would say that he is? Ask the teens to use their paper to create Facebook profiles for Jesus. What activities, quotes, personal details, photos, status updates, or wall posts might Jesus use to tell the online world about who he is? Give the teens some time to work, and then invite them to share their finished products. Note any similarities or differences between the profiles that they create. Then, invite the teens to spend a few minutes thinking about how the profile they created for Jesus compares to their own Facebook profile. How are they similar? How are they different? If people could only see their Facebook profile, what might they conclude about who they are?

Closing Prayer

*Almighty God,
you love the world with abundant care and mercy.
Your Son mandates
that the Cross is the way to life with you.
May we pick it up with great hope this day
and never seek shortcuts that would bypass
the transforming lessons of obedient and
sacrificial love.
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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.