

Read

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 2, 2022



REFLECTION

Imagine this scene: restaurateur Gordon Ramsey stops in at one of his own restaurants for a meal, but when he peeks into the back to see how his dinner is coming along, the cook tells him, "I've been cleaning the fryers all day and I'm exhausted. You can take over for a while."

With that image in mind, let's look at today's Gospel. Jesus tells his apostles a parable about a servant and his master, asking whether the master should be grateful that the servant did what he was expected to do. Christ is warning his apostles that discipleship is a hard and thankless path. We need to roll up our sleeves and get to work, trusting Christ to use our efforts to build up his kingdom whether or not we see its fruits in our lifetime.

ACTION

In the verse preceding today's Gospel, Jesus told his disciples to forgive anyone who asks, even someone who sins against them and repents seven times in a day. It's no wonder then that today's Gospel begins with the apostles asking Jesus to increase their faith! Faith can uproot trees and move mountains; we need it to uproot selfishness and move our hearts. We need it to persevere against the things that might challenge our discipleship. Throughout the New Testament, we see how the apostles were given the gift of faith enough to work miracles and face persecution. This week, follow their example by saying one of these prayers for faith when you wake up and go to bed each day: "Jesus, increase my faith!" (see Luke 17:5) or "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (see Mark 9:24).



"Overcomer"—Mandisa
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z29oPjFbqg>

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Jesus' disciples continued to follow him even though he told them hard truths. Can you think of leaders or mentors whom you respect in part because they tell it like it is?
- ❖ Do you feel prepared to face persecution or hardship for your faith?



October 2, 2022

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #141C

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

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 shares a remarkable and inspiring message. He tells the apostles that if they have faith the size of a mustard seed, they could do the impossible. The teaching does not end there. Jesus proceeds to share about the life of a servant. Someone who works in the field, when finished, is still expected to serve the master in the home. These two stories together show what the followers of God are to do: have faith, expect the miraculous, and understand that it is the Lord's work and not our own. The Gospel constantly reminds us that there is one savior, Jesus Christ. Though our lives are meant to be inspired by his, we will never be him. We are not saviors, but servants. Understanding our role as the servants of God will lead us to an increase of faith, knowing that it all does not depend on us.

Q FOCUS: *It is not enough to say that we believe, we must live out our faith in loving service.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

October 2 is the memorial of the holy guardian angels. Guardian angels are not just fanciful dreams or a childhood prayer. Rather, throughout its history, the Church has held a belief in their presence and divinely directed activity in the world. They are mentioned in the Bible as well, such as in Tobit 6—12,

Matthew 18:10, and Luke 1:26–38. On October 4, the Church celebrates the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, an exemplary saint who emulated the life of Christ. Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated on Friday, October 7.

Church Teaching Connection

“Let us too, like the Apostles, say to the Lord: ‘Increase our faith!’ Yes, Lord, our faith is small, our faith is weak and fragile, but we offer it to you as it is, so you can make it grow. . . . How do we draw from this strength? We draw it from God in prayer. Prayer is the breath of faith: in a relationship of trust, in a relationship of love, dialogue cannot be left out, and prayer is the dialogue of the soul with God” (Pope Francis, Angelus Message, October 6, 2013).

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

Luke 17:5-10

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” The Lord replied, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

“Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here immediately and take your place at table’? Would he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished’? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.’”

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 rate the amount of faith you have? How would you rate your prayer life and how you express your faith?

► Are you satisfied with where you are, or like the apostles, are you seeking more?

The request of the apostles that starts today's Gospel (“Increase our faith”) could very well be our own. Let's take a moment to just say this statement aloud: Increase our faith!

What a beautiful and simple prayer to offer to God. Jesus responds to his apostles and tells them if they had faith the size of a mustard seed they would accomplish miracles. This image of the mustard seed is often used in faith formation and you may have heard about it before. However, let's take some time today to reflect on it in this moment in our lives and how it relates to our prayer life.

One of the most astounding things about Jesus' statement is that the mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds. Jesus reminds us that even a small amount of faith can be powerful. Using this reminder as a guide, let's evaluate our prayer life.

Prayer is our way of communicating with God. In prayer, we express our joy, our frustrations, our doubts, and our faith. When you pray, do you mean what you say, or do you just say words that you have memorized? Does the setting of when and where you pray affect the depth of your prayer? The Catholic faith has many beautiful prayers from our tradition. These prayers give voice to all of our struggles and all of our happiness and they are directed to God.

► What prayers do you know by heart? What are some of the most popular Catholic prayers?

► Which prayers are your favorite?

These prayers are also like seeds. They contain the power to do the miraculous. Prayer is not a transactional thing. We cannot approach prayer like God's vending machine: if we pray this certain prayer we will get a miracle. That's not how it works.

Instead, prayer is a relational thing. When we open ourselves up to God and express ourselves authentically in prayer, we are building a relationship.

► Have you ever had a relationship that was mostly transactional? Where the other person just wanted something from you? If so, how does it feel to be in a transactional relationship?

God wants so much more for us than just to give us things. God wants to be in a relationship with each one of us. When we are in a friendship with God, then a little faith goes a long way.

Part of having faith, though, also means dealing with moments when our faith is tested. Even if we are in true friendship with God, and we pray like we mean it, sometimes our prayers are not answered in the way we hope. Again, prayer is not a vending machine. How many times have people lifted up truly heartfelt prayers and they were not answered like they expected? Those moments may even decrease our faith, not increase it.

In these moments, it is important to recall this image of faith the size of a mustard seed. Faith can be pretty small, like a seed, and pretty fragile as well. Yet even with a small amount, we accomplish great things. Still, we also need to keep praying for an increase in faith, so that we can accomplish as much of God's will as we are able to, with his help.

When we trust in God, even if our prayers aren't answered in the way we expect, we trust that God is still answering them in God's own way. Remember, we are the servant in this story. We are not God. Our job is trust in God and conform our hearts to his. When our prayers are matching his purpose, then we will be seeing miracles all around.

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 34.

"Lord, increase our faith" should be our anthem as growing men and women of God.

Intentional, heartfelt prayer is the best way for our faith to increase.

Trusting in God means knowing that we are not in charge, but are opening our hearts to God's will.

Act on the Word

Mustard Seed Prayer

For this activity, you will need a pack of mustard seeds for planting (making sure to have a few seeds for each participant), small paper cups (one per person), markers, potting soil to fill the cups, and spoons for scooping the soil.

This activity helps the young people to better understand the Gospel message of faith and prayer by making the imagery of the mustard seed that Jesus uses a concrete reality. Each participant will be planting their own mustard seed to take home, pray with, and help grow. Schedule a date everyone can bring back their mustard plant to see whose grew the largest. Wait at least two weeks to start bringing them back.

Arrange all the materials on a table. Make sure to have cleaning supplies handy, as this activity can get messy. Invite each participant to take a paper cup and a marker. Instruct them that they will be designing their cup with prayers or prayer intentions. They should take time to really think about how they want to decorate their cup. If their prayer intention is

private, suggest that they use a signifying word or symbol to remind them of that prayer intention.

After participants have decorated their cups, they will fill them with some potting soil and place a few mustard seeds in the soil. As they are doing this, they can share some of their prayer intentions within small groups.

When everyone has finished sharing, give these final instructions (or something like this): Our prayer today is "Lord, increase our faith!" The best way to increase our faith is to spend time in prayer. You are taking home a mustard plant. The smallest of seeds will soon grow into something that is alive and growing. You are going home with your faith. It may be small now, but it is continuing to grow. For your mustard plant and your faith, remember to water it. Watering a plant is easy, but you might need to set a reminder on your phone to make sure you don't forget. You can do the same with your prayer life! Spend some extra time in prayer over the next several weeks reflecting on the invisible but growing seed and your growing faith. Soon you will see something sprout. Be on the lookout for how your faith has sprouted in new ways in your daily life too. We will bring back our plants (pick a day to return, wait at least two weeks) and share the ways our plants and our faith have grown.

Closing Prayer

*Lord God,
you give us faith that can do great things.*

*Grant that we may be supported
as we seek to develop our faith.*

*May we always serve you
through our discipleship.*

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.