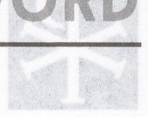


Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalm 54:3-4, 5, 6-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37



## Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### September 22, 2024



### REFLECTION

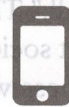
Think about the leaders you encounter on a daily basis, whether at home, in school, at work, with sports, or through other activities. Given the variety of different leadership styles (even just from your teachers), you certainly have a sense of which ones are effective and ineffective leaders.

What makes someone a good leader? For Jesus, the greatest leaders are concerned with serving the people they are entrusted with leading, especially those who have little to no power over their situation. Put another way, servant leaders use their gifts and talents to help others achieve their goals, by expressing Christlike love and concern for the well-being of all. Servant leadership is hopefully something you have seen modeled in your own life, with people who are humble instead of boastful and collaborative instead of cut-throat. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus uses his power to empower others, and expects his disciples to do the same. To follow Jesus Christ means to love as he loved and lead as he led, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves.



### ACTION

Look through the Gospels and make a list of the qualities of Jesus. How did he lead? How did he treat others? What were his priorities? Then search the internet for videos and articles about good leadership qualities and make another list. You can also draw upon your own lived experiences of good leaders. Assess whether or not the second list aligns with the model of leadership Christ gives us in the Gospels. How can you put his qualities into practice in your own life?



Though written through the lens of a business leader, these ten qualities of a servant leader can be applied to your interactions with others.

<https://ltp.org/s/servant-leaders>

### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Who models servant leadership in your daily life?
- ❖ What do you find most challenging about becoming a servant leader in today's world?



September 22, 2024

# TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #134B

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalms 54:3-4, 5, 6-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

## 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 reading, we hear Jesus' radical definition of greatness: "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." This view of greatness is very different from what society professes today. Jesus' definition of greatness was not just something he said, it is something he embodied in every aspect of his life. All of the Gospel accounts depict Jesus' message to us today. They chronicle his interactions with others, focusing on loving and serving them rather than gaining power and influence for himself. We are called to do the same.

**Q FOCUS:** Greatness is not about power but is about loving service.

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

On September 28, the Church honors St. Lorenzo Ruiz and his companions, who were martyred in 1637. Lorenzo was born in Manila and grew up in the faith. Although he was a husband and father, he left his family behind to seek asylum with Dominican missionaries on their way to Japan after he had been accused of murder. There was widespread persecution of Christians in Japan at that time and Lorenzo and the other missionaries were cruelly tortured to death but did not renounce their religious beliefs during their torture. Lorenzo is the

first person from the Philippines to be recognized as a martyr and be canonized.

### Church Teaching Connection

"If you want to be first, you need to get in line, be last, and serve everyone. Through this shocking phrase, the Lord inaugurates a reversal: he overturns the criteria about what truly matters. The value of a person does not depend any more on the role they have, the work they do, the money they have in the bank. No, no, no, it does not depend on this. Greatness and success in God's eyes are measured differently: they are measured by *service*. Not on what someone *has*, but on what someone *gives*. Do you want to be first? Serve. This is the way" (Pope Francis, Angelus Message, September 19, 2021).

## 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 9:30-37

**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 left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise." But they did not

understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child, he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me."

**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 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct," he remarked that greatness comes from a person's ability to love and serve others. You don't need to have a college education or to be an elected official to be great. Greatness is dependent on the degree to which we follow Jesus' teachings and imitate his life.

### ► How do people your age define greatness?

In today's Gospel, we see the desire for greatness even present among the disciples. While we might be quick to condemn these followers of Jesus for their foolish argument, we aren't that much different. All human beings desire to be known. We all want to be loved and to be appreciated. There is a part of us that wants to be recognized for who we are and what we can do.

While society gets caught up in worldly definitions of greatness, Jesus redefines it completely. If you want to be first, place yourself last. If you desire

honor, begin by honoring the other. The path to greatness is through humility. Jesus could give us this definition of greatness because he was the greatest and he lived his life putting others first, loving and serving them. He gave his time to the sinner. He spent his life on the margins, rejected by society. He saw people for who they were on the inside and not the status that society externally placed on them. Our way of life in Christ is through service.

► How do you think people your age today might react to hearing Jesus' definition of greatness? Is it compatible with the general outlook of greatness they have?

► Who inspires you by their service? Who provides an example of selfless love in your life?

There are many examples of service in our world today. Many are secular, without any connection to faith. Yet for Christians, serving others in any way is an expression of our faith as we follow in Jesus' example. We serve because Jesus served. We love others because Jesus loved others and loves us. As Christians, we are called to journey with all our brothers and sisters, no matter their situation. Our faith calls us to give of ourselves, to use our power to effect change, and to raise our voice for the voiceless. When we do these things, we are sharing in the greatness of Christ. We walk with all who have shared in that same greatness of faithful service. Let's be great together.

## 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.*

**Greatness comes from our ability to follow Jesus' example of service.**

**Jesus lived the example of servant leadership and invites us to do the same.**

**Christianity's understanding of greatness is different from society's understanding of greatness.**

# Act on the Word

## Reflecting on Service

For this activity, you will need pens, paper, and a whiteboard. You will also need internet access to allow the teens to research service opportunities in your area. Before the activity begins, you should prepare a list of service opportunities your parish already participates in.

If your youth group already has an established service program, you can use this activity as a time of reflection on what has already been done and if there are ways you can expand your service or change the organizations you support. If your youth group has not done any community service yet or does not have an established service program, this activity can serve as a time to reflect and brainstorm ways that teens can get involved in serving their community. In either situation, listening to the interests and voices of the young people can be an empowering process that helps them take ownership of their service.

Gather the teens and split them into small groups. To begin, have them reflect on their local community and come up with a list of what they perceive as the greatest needs. Remind them that our service is not always helpful to others if it does not take into account the voices and needs of the people we are serving. Once the groups have brainstormed a list of needs, have them share their notes with the large group. Write down their ideas on the whiteboard.

Once you have a working list generated by the teens, ask them if they feel anything is missing, or add some of your own thoughts. Then narrow down the needs list to four or five of the most important needs (or select the number of needs that correspond to the number of small groups). Assign one (or more)

need to each small group. Give the small groups time to come up with a way the youth group could help address this need. Provide them with a list of service organizations your parish is already involved with and allow them to search online for local agencies or other service organizations. The goal of this time is for the teens to think of ways that they can be part of the solution. The service opportunities they come up with must be teen friendly. (If your group already has an established service program, this time can be used to evaluate it or consider new opportunities to serve.)

Have each group present their ideas to the large group. After all options have been presented, decide on a project that the whole group seems to have the most interest in and is feasible for the youth group to do. Make a plan for when the group can serve and schedule it.

## Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,  
you humbled yourself to the point of  
being obedient,  
even to death on a cross.  
Remove from us all our trivial  
expressions of self-importance,  
and strengthen us to be your true servants.  
Who live and reign 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](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.