



July 18, 2021

# SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #107B

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalms 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

Ephesians 2:13-18

Mark 6:30-34

## 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

Rest is a consistent need for every living human being. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus encourages the disciples to take some time away, but they cannot because so many people are desperately seeking them and Jesus. Putting aside his own needs, Jesus addresses the needs of the people instead. He recognizes that the people are starving for his word, and that they are sheep who need to be guided, protected and loved. We, too, are called to self-giving, like Jesus. Jesus is our place of joyful and fulfilling rest; he is the good shepherd who takes care of our needs and leads us to safety.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus places our needs before his own.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

On July 22, the Church remembers St. Mary Magdalene. The example she sets in Scripture gives us a beautiful example of self-sacrifice and self-denying love. She washes Jesus' feet, and she faithfully follows him to the cross. Out of love she does not run from that which is scary or frightening; rather, she embraces it. She is moved by her encounter with Christ to share the Good News with others. Like Mary Magdalene, we are called to place the needs of others before our own desires and share with them the love of God.

### Church Teaching Connection

"In his preaching [Jesus] clearly described an obligation on the part of the daughters and sons of God to treat each other as sisters and brother. In his prayer he asked that all his followers should be one. As the redeemer of all of humanity he delivered himself up to death for the sake of all: 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' ([John 15:13]). His command to the apostles was to preach the Gospel to all nations in order that the human race would become the family of God, in which love would be the fullness of the law" (*Gaudium et spes*, 32).

## 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 6:30-34

**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.*

The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.

# Read

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

Ephesians 2:13-18

Mark 6:30-34

## LIVING THE WORD

### Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 18, 2021



#### REFLECTION

What a tremendous invitation Jesus gives us in today's Gospel: Come, take time for yourself to renew your spirit and rest (Mark 6:31). Hear Jesus extend that invitation to you. In our overscheduled world that values busy-ness more than well-being, can you hear Jesus place value on dedicating time to be still and reflect? Instead of the kind of recreation that re-creates our inner life, we habitually turn to a form of disengagement (or sloth) in front of a screen when we're physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. Not the same thing. And yes, even for Jesus and the Apostles, occasionally a real need arises, requiring those plans be put on hold. Just as there is a huge difference between sloth and restful reflection, there is a huge difference between suspending plans for a real need and neglecting the spiritual growth of our inner life by constantly being too busy for prayer. Learn to listen to the Holy Spirit to know the difference.



#### ACTION

This week, carve out time to rest and reflect with the Lord. One of the beautiful gifts of the Catholic faith is the rich tradition of prayerful practices to assist in doing so. Throughout the entire history of the Church, the faithful have sought ways to pray that fulfill the desires of the inner life so that they may grow in relationship with the God who created us. What works for some might not work for others. What works for you now might not work for you next year. If prayer is conversation with God, then it makes perfect sense that our conversations will be varied and different. Attend a retreat. Spend time in the quiet of Eucharistic Adoration. Sit with Scripture in the beauty of nature. Find a way to rest, reflect, and pray.

One prayer practice to try this week is the Examen, which was developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDQgjzJINdk>



#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What practices help you to spend time resting and reflecting with Jesus?
- ❖ What gets in the way of making time for prayer?

## 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 230.

**Jesus put the needs of the people before his own needs.**

**We are called to self-sacrifice like that of our Lord.**

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd who keeps us safe and meets our needs.**

## Act on the Word

### The Giving Tree

You will need a copy of the book "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein.

Read *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein with the teens. You can read it to them, or have volunteers take turns reading the story aloud. (Do not pass the book to the teens assuming each teen will want to read aloud. Some teenagers, especially dyslexic teens, have terrible anxiety about reading aloud.) Once you have completed the book, begin a discussion utilizing these questions or other questions you've prepared.

This children's book is about a tree and her boy, whom she loves very much. She gives the boy parts of herself to make him happy, and she does this until she is nothing but a stump. The boy does not offer self-sacrifice, but takes the gifts from the tree, allowing her to give until she is a stump. The story is often highlighted as a tale of ideal self-denial and admirable self-sacrifice. However, the story shows both healthy and unhealthy self-sacrificial acts.

- ✧ In this book, do you see the gift of self-sacrifice?
- ✧ What does self-sacrifice look like in this book?
- ✧ How does the tree show self-sacrifice?
- ✧ How does the boy demonstrate self-sacrifice?
- ✧ How can you determine if your own or someone else's self-sacrifice is healthy, and does the tree demonstrate healthy self-sacrifice?
- ✧ Self-sacrifice is typically targeted as a good and spiritually healthy attribute, but at what point does it become unhealthy? Can a person deliberately hurt him or herself and mislabel it self-sacrifice?
- ✧ How do people take care of themselves while still offering self-sacrifice for others? What does that look like for you as you mature through your teenage years?

## Closing Prayer

*Good and glorious Father,  
your Son drew great energy from the time  
he spent with you in prayer,  
and he showed his disciples the need to  
do the same.  
May we never grow weary of quiet time spent  
with you,  
so that life around us may be kept in proper order.  
We ask this 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.

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

**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:*

► **What do you do when you need to retreat from others and simply rest? Do you utilize silence? Soft music? Quiet darkness? Bright, cheery sunshine? Something else?**

► **How do you feel when you are rested?**

We all rest in different ways, but all of us require rest. We cannot work or interact at every moment of every day; we must take time to recharge in order to function well. In the Gospel reading today, we hear that the disciples returned from the mission Jesus sent them on (from last week's Gospel). They must have been exhausted from traveling and facing unknown circumstances. Jesus recognizes this and invites them to take some time to rest. Unfortunately, they can't find a place to relax because there were so many people following them. The people were thirsty for Jesus' teaching and ministry.

► **How do you feel when you are unrested and agitated?**

The disciples must have felt some frustration at the reaction of the crowd. They desperately needed time away to recharge so that they could continue their work. People often feel peevish or short tempered when they cannot meet basic needs like resting or having time to eat. Jesus, however, responds pastorally to the demanding situation. Instead of taking care of his needs, he focuses on others' tremendous need for him. He gave up basic human comfort so that others might have nourishment from his word. Jesus is the ultimate model of self-sacrifice, and we are called to follow in his footsteps. The people's need for Jesus was an immediate need.

► **Where in your life do you recognize Jesus' presence, supplying what you need?**

Sometimes when we are in a bad mood and need our space, God provides us with that space. Other times, God renews our spirit and we're able to continue in a better mood even though we haven't gotten the space we wanted. Jesus understands our needs and the needs of others. He has a deep compassion for us. He knows that we sometimes feel lost in this world. He guides us to himself, where we will find what we truly need. The end of today's Gospel reminds us of the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd—Jesus watches out for us, protects, gives us what we need, and leads us to the safety of eternal life.

► **How can you know that Jesus is present with you, even when you cannot feel his presence with you? Is Jesus' presence dependent on your feelings or whether or not he is there?**