



Bringing Home the Word

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

June 28, 2020

To Live with Christ

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A priest friend of mine visited a family with several sons thinking about the priestly vocation. During his visit he celebrated Mass for them at the local parish. The Gospel reading was the same as today: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me....” My friend thought twice before reading it, afraid that the father who wasn’t open to his sons’ vocations would think he picked this passage on purpose. He read it anyway and, yes, got the reaction he suspected he’d get.

Most words in the Gospels are challenging. Jesus calls us to love him above all things. This means he has to come first, and sometimes other loves, as good as they are, cannot be the ultimate criteria. He tells us to “lose our life” to find it, and sometimes that loss is real and painful.

He demands this because he himself experienced its truth. In his public ministry, he put his mission and love of souls ahead of spending more time with family and friends. When religious leaders, government officials, and others criticized and persecuted him, he didn’t back down, even if it affected his loved ones. He was faithful in charity. He didn’t look for problems, but he didn’t run from them, either. He avoided unnecessary conflict when he could, but he completely obeyed God’s will and embraced the hardships of loving until the end.

This kind of sacrifice brings great joy if endured with acceptance. As Romans tells us, “If, then, we have died with Christ, ...we shall also live with him.” +

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above all things.*

A Word from Pope Francis

The word of Christ wants to reach all people....Every parish and every ecclesial reality may become a sanctuary for the one who seeks God and a welcoming home for the poor, the elderly, and those who find themselves in need.... Go, welcome! Go, seek! Go, bring love, mercy, and tenderness.

—Eucharistic concelebration,
Naples, March 21, 2015



Sunday Readings

2 Kings 4:8–11, 14–16a

Elisha promised, “This time next year you will be cradling a baby son.”

Romans 6:3–4, 8–11

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

Matthew 10:37–42

[Jesus said,] “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How can I live my life as though nothing is more important than Jesus?
- Do I regularly witness to my love for Jesus?

Why We Need the Church

By Thomas H. Groome

Ever wonder why Catholics emphasize going to church as a way of keeping the Sabbath holy? Of course Protestant Christians are committed to Sunday worship, but we add a note of obligation. For us, participating in Sunday Mass is a privilege but also a serious responsibility.



We may not miss Sunday Mass—except for some good reason. And, far more than attending as spectators, we are expected to function as active members in a community.

The sense of Sunday obligation is only one instance of the communal emphasis that is core to Catholicism. Catholic Christian faith is essentially communal; we are disciples in community and a community of disciples. We're convinced that God reaches out to us as community and that we most effectively reach out to God together. So, we may not simply watch Mass on TV or go to a mountaintop for our own religious experience.

It is through Christian community that we access the Scriptures and traditions that forge our identity in faith, to the sacraments that sustain us, to the models of holiness in the saints, to people to pray with us on our journey home to God. Indeed, Catholic spirituality calls us to a personal relationship with God,

but through Christian community.

In Our Nature

The Bible highlights the communal nature of faith. Indeed, it seems that God designed our human nature as relational. When God differentiated the lonely Adam into male and female, he made them “companions” to each

other. Then, beginning with God's call of Abraham and Sarah to parent a people, Hebrew faith is lived as community.

Likewise, early Christians favored communal metaphors to describe their shared discipleship to Jesus. Paul's image of the Church as the body of Christ was the most compelling. Within this body, the hand and foot, the eye and ear, and all individual parts are vitally important; yet all the organs must function together as one (see 1 Corinthians 12:26). By baptism, we are bonded together as one with Christ and each other; “we though many, are one body in Christ (Romans 12:5). And all members must contribute their gifts for “building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

Rooted in History

During the Reformation, Protestant leaders rebelled against the exaggerated power of the Church, charging it with replacing rather than representing God. As a consequence, they de-emphasized

the communal nature of Christian faith. When the Catholic Church regrouped at the Council of Trent, it agreed that people must have their own personal relationship with God but that our faith must be realized through Christian community.

Catholicism is so intent on the communal nature of faith as to propose that even death doesn't break the bond of baptism. So, we can ask those in the eternal presence of God to pray for us—with Mary holding pride of place among this communion of saints. Likewise, we can intercede for departed loved ones who may need “purgation” in order to enter the eternal presence of God. In death, “life is changed, not ended” (preface, “Mass of Resurrection”) and certainly not the bond of baptism.

This communal emphasis of Catholicism requires that we be active in a local parish. If we don't like our assigned one, the Code of Canon Law gives us permission to “shop around” a bit. It is imperative that we find a local Catholic community to call home and share our time, talents, and treasure to sustain its mission. For Catholics at least, we're all in this together. +

PRAYER

Lord, your death on the cross brought life to the world. Help me follow your example of selfless love.

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 29–July 4

Monday, Sts. Peter and Paul:
Acts 12:1–11 / 2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18 /
Mt 16:13–19

Tuesday, Weekday:
Am 3:1–8; 4:11–12 / Mt 8:23–27

Wednesday, Weekday:
Am 5:14–15, 21–24 / Mt 8:28–34

Thursday, Weekday:
Am 7:10–17 / Mt 9:1–8

Friday, St. Thomas:
Eph 2:19–22 / Jn 20:24–29

Saturday, Weekday:
Am 9:11–15 / Mt 9:14–17

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