



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
September 27, 2020

Say Yes and Go Out

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

We can really relate to God when he repeats the people's blame and accusations at him for not being fair. In moments of suffering or injustice, it's easy to pass judgment and blame it all on God. It's especially difficult when innocent and good people (ourselves included) suffer. We're tempted to ask, "Aren't you supposed to treat your friends better?"

We only need to look at Marco Palmezzano's painting *Christ Bearing the Cross* to reconsider our complaints. How have we treated God?

Jesus was and is the most innocent of souls; no other being was or is as good

as Jesus. No one was asked to suffer like him, and he suffered not to gain for himself but to pay our debt. Relating it to today's Gospel lesson, Jesus is the son who, when asked to work in his Father's vineyard, promptly said "yes" and went. Always obedient, always docile, always loving.

Watching Jesus, we hear the echo of St. Paul's letter. Jesus humbly regarded his brothers and sisters as more than himself and was willing to go to the cross and win them back for the Father. Keep in mind, those siblings had destroyed family unity, squandered away their inheritance, sold their birthright, sold him into slavery with their sin, and very often refused his love. Yet "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God knows his merciful justice well and can kindly and provokingly ask in Ezekiel 18:25, "Is it my way that is unfair? Are not your ways unfair?" +

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 18:25–28

Since they turned away from all the sins they committed, they shall live.

Philippians 2:1–11 or 2:1-5

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves.

Matthew 21:28–32

[Jesus said,] "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

No one was asked to suffer like Jesus, and he suffered not to gain for himself but to pay our debt.

A Word from Pope Francis

Today let us look at our hands, so often empty of love, and let us try to think of some free gift that we can give without expecting anything in return. That will please the Lord. And let us ask him: "Lord, let me rediscover the joy of giving."

Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I fair to God by giving him thanksgiving, adoration, and obedience for his love?
- Am I fair to others by offering them gratitude and humble kindness?

I Have No Hands But Yours

By Johan van Parys

My mother was big on two major cleaning efforts each year. The first was Easter cleaning—she argued that just as our souls needed cleansing in preparation for Easter, so did our home. The second was a fall cleaning that coincided with the St. Michael Summer, named for the September 29 feast of the archangels.

Our share in these week-long adventures was a thorough reorganization of our closets. We were instructed to remove every item, discern what we wanted to keep or toss, and then organize all that remained. To this day, I have a perfectly organized closet.

Over the years I've come to appreciate my mom's connection between the physical cleansing of our home and the spiritual cleansing of our heart and soul. As Christians, we're called to search our soul to rid ourselves of everything that keeps us from sharing more perfectly in the Body of Christ. We do this mostly as individuals, but from time to time even the Church takes stock of where we've come from, where we are today, and where we're going.

This kind of spiritual exercise is necessary because being Christian isn't always easy. Neither is being the Church, especially in a constantly changing and challenging world. Some people are



trying to take the Church in a direction that makes it difficult to reconcile with the gospel. Others call for a return to the past, giving in to a false nostalgia for a Church they never knew and that may never have existed. Both responses are ill-fated—we can't go back to the past, and we ought to be true to the gospel.

The only way forward in this age—as in every age—is to engage completely and openly with the world while using the gospel as our compass. The essence of our message never changes. However, the language we use to express it ought to change constantly. Like everything else,

our spiritual lives necessarily evolve—and so does the Church's. The alternative is a slow but sure spiritual demise.

I wish my spiritual home were in as good order as my physical home is. I still hear my mother's voice asking me to clean my room and cleanse my soul. And I take solace in the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that stands abandoned in a small Italian village. Due to years of neglect, the statue is badly in need of repair; it's cracked, and both hands are missing. Someone hung a sign around its neck that says, "I have no hands but yours." This image and invitation should prompt us to analyze our lives so we might be better Christians.

We're called to do this to realize that Christ's invitation is to be his hands, his feet, and his heart. +

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your example of humble service toward others. Help me to be a humble and loving person toward all people.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 28–October 3

Monday, Weekday:
Jb 1:6–22 / Lk 9:46–50

Tuesday, Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael: Dn 7:9–10, 13–14 or Rv 12:7–12a / Jn 1:47–51

Wednesday, St. Jerome:
Jb 9:1–12, 14–16 / Lk 9:57–62

Thursday, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: Jb 19:21–27 / Lk 10:1–12

Friday, Holy Guardian Angels:
Jb 38:1, 12–21; 40:3–5 / Mt 18:1–5, 10

Saturday, Weekday:
Jb 42:1–3, 5–6, 12–17 / Lk 10:17–24