



Bringing Home the Word

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

July 11, 2021

Our Tradition of Service

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Blessed Fra Angelico, a fifteenth-century Dominican brother, was also a famous painter—so much so that St. John Paul II made him the patron of painters. His chapel for Pope Nicholas V, dedicated to Deacon St. Lawrence, patron of Rome, still survives in the Vatican.

The emperor reportedly told St. Lawrence to show him the treasures of the Church, and so he brought the poor before the Roman emperor, saying that these are the Church's true treasures. Fra Angelico's wonderful 1449 fresco, *St. Lawrence Giving Alms*, shows Lawrence, who served

in Rome in the third century, giving coins to the poor and lame of the city.

Indeed, for the Church, those most in need are those who most interest us, because they are the ones who most interested Christ. From the very beginning, Jesus sent out his apostles, two by two, to prepare people to receive his preaching. They were to heal the sick, cast out demons, and preach the gospel of salvation. He did not concentrate his efforts only on the influential, although he didn't avoid them, but rather invested his efforts in forming his apostles in preaching and service.

Christ has entrusted the Church with that same mission, and it continues to fulfill this charge worldwide. No continent or country is without the presence of the Catholic Church, with its missionaries and institutions who care for the materially, intellectually, and spiritually poor. We should be proud to be part of such a worldwide force for good that has served so many for so long. +

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Sunday Readings

Amos 7:12–15

The LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

Ephesians 1:3–14 or 1:3–10

In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace.

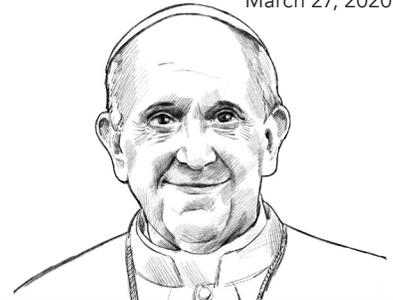
Mark 6:7–13

[Jesus said,] "Whatever place does not welcome you...leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them."

A Word from Pope Francis

Our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people—often forgotten people—who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines...doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers...and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves.

—Extraordinary moment of prayer, March 27, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I participate in the Church's mission of serving the poor?
- What more can I do to educate my children or others in this important aspect?

One World, Two Views

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

I remember watching an elementary-school principal deal with a child who was sent to the office for bad behavior. She asked the youngster, “Do you know what you did?” Tearfully, without hesitation, the child answered, “Yes, I’m bad.” The principal countered saying, “No, you’re not bad. You just did a bad thing.”

For centuries the world has been labeled by Catholics as depraved, horrible, and bad. Men and women in religious life struggled to understand how to view, interact with, and engage the world around them. Why is it that saintly founders such as Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola, Vincent de Paul, Alphonsus Liguori, Teresa of Ávila, Catherine McAuley, Frances Cabrini and so many others were attracted to the monastery, the convent, and ministry among the economically poor, sick, uneducated, and marginalized? Certainly, it was because Jesus called them by his word and example. But wasn’t it also because of their worldview? Their vocations grew from their understanding of good and evil, that people needed to be saved from the world and that good people were needed to do the saving. Those who saw the world as God-forsaken ran to religious life, fleeing from the world, in the hope of finding salvation for themselves and others.

After the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), however, some men and women entered religious life with a



different understanding. The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) articulated a different worldview and helped redefine our understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world. The world and all that is in it is good, and it is not only worthy of the Church’s attention, but the Church’s embrace. Interaction with the world and all who are in it can offer us an experience of grace and goodness. With Vatican II, it became more and more difficult to clearly define the world as good or evil, and consequently, to understand that people are so unequivocally in need of being

saved from it. The clear line between good and evil as it applies to the world was blurred. And so, one enters religious life not to flee the world but to engage it more fully and experience salvation by living in it.

Two distinct worldviews continue to exist in the Church and in religious life today. Are they simply two paths leading to the same destination? The one you espouse will determine the direction of your life. Condemn the world as evil and run away from it or run toward the world and embrace it in all its goodness? These are not easy questions to answer, that is, unless you remember the time you got sent to the principal’s office. Were you bad? Or did you just do a bad thing? +

When you were reprimanded as a child, were you bad or did you just do a bad thing?

PRAYER

Lord, you offered your life in humble service to humanity. Empower me with your Spirit, that I may be a humble servant of love and compassion to all people.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 12–17

Monday, Weekday:
Ex 1:8–14, 22 / Mt 10:34–11:1

Tuesday, Weekday:
Ex 2:1–15a / Mt 11:20–24

Wednesday, St. Kateri Tekakwitha:
Ex 3:1–6, 9–12 / Mt 11:25–27

Thursday, St. Bonaventure:
Ex 3:13–20 / Mt 11:28–30

Friday, Weekday:
Ex 11:10–12:14 / Mt 12:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Ex 12:37–42 / Mt 12:14–21

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