



Bringing Home the Word

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
August 8, 2021

Jesus' Coming Down Among Us

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In *The Martyr*, Marc Chagall, a painter in the late last century and one of the favorites of Pope Francis, shows Jesus' crucifixion as a global mystery. It is not just an event in the past. Jesus is still coming down among the throngs of needy souls of the modern day, laying down his life and accompanying them in their sufferings.

The Gospel of John uses this term of "coming down" to take up the theme of the Incarnation. Jesus left his heavenly home and came down among us. He lowered himself to dirty his feet along

the tortuous routes on which humanity travels. He is not unapproachable, far from the sufferings of his followers, but has become like them in all things but sin. He knows the hunger and needs of his people.

This is nothing new for God. He came down to walk in the Garden with Adam and Eve. He came down to see the people building the Tower of Babel. He came down to Moses in the burning bush and in giving the Ten Commandments. And he came down to console and feed Elijah, who was despairing of his life. He gave Elijah food for his journey, strengthening him to travel in the desert.

In the Eucharist, Jesus comes down to you today to carry your burdens and give you his life. He urges us to get up, eat. He is the Living Bread come down from heaven that, if we unite with him in holy Communion, he will give us his divine force and we will live eternally with him. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

[Christ] took our names upon himself, to the very end, including the evil that is within us....Anyone, in whatever situation..., can invoke the holy name of the Lord, who is faithful and merciful Love. God will never say no to a heart that invokes him sincerely.

—General audience, August 22, 2018



Sunday Readings

1 Kings 19:4-8

[Elijah] got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights.

Ephesians 4:30—5:2

Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

John 6:41-51

[Jesus said,] "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Jesus comes down to be with me. Am I available in my heart to be with him?
- Do I cast my burdens on him by turning to him with my sins and crosses?

The Opposite Reaction

By Kathleen M. Basi

*Go and learn the meaning of the words,
“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”*

Matthew 9:13

Mercy. It’s such a familiar word. It bookends every Mass, rolling glibly off our tongues until it’s more a catch phrase than a word with real meaning. Really, how much is there to say about God’s forgiveness?

When I dug into it, though, I realized my definition was too limited. Mercy isn’t just something God gives to us. It’s something we’re called to give to others. Nor is it just about forgiveness. It’s about the attitudes that shape our actions.

Think of that one person who knows all the right buttons to push and does so with glee. You can spend your whole life tied up in knots about how—or whether—to respond. You can waste countless hours and endless emotional energy locked inside your head, having arguments with this person, putting words in her mouth that she never spoke and assuming the worst about her intentions. You might even write off the relationship altogether.

Mercy calls us to do the opposite. Mercy invites us to open our minds and hearts to the people we find most difficult. What influences have shaped them? What wounds are hidden beneath their antagonism? Mercy asks us to consider the things we cannot know and approach conflict with a spirit of



compassion rather than judgment. In short, give people the benefit of the doubt.

This is not easy. In fact, it’s superhuman. That’s why we need God’s help. That’s why we need to receive the sacraments regularly—because they offer us the spiritual nourishment we need in order to do the real work of Christian living. And what is that real work?

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25:35–36).

This passage, the source of the corporal works of mercy, leaves no doubt that the work of mercy is the heart of Christian discipleship and the standard by which we will be judged at the end of time. There is no distinction between those who deserve help and those who do not. We are called to show mercy to everyone. +

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PRAYER

*Lord, you give us your Spirit
to renew the earth. Instill in
my heart the spirit of love,
compassion, forgiveness,
and peace, that I may be
a source of healing.*

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 9–14

Monday, Weekday:
Dt 10:12–22 / Mt 17:22–27

Tuesday, St. Lawrence:
2 Cor 9:6–10 / Jn 12:24–26

Wednesday, St. Clare:
Dt 34:1–12 / Mt 18:15–20

Thursday, Weekday:
Jos 3:7–10a, 11, 13–17 / Mt 18:21–19:1

Friday, Weekday:
Jos 24:1–13 / Mt 19:3–12

Saturday, St. Maximilian Kolbe:
Jos 24:14–29 / Mt 19:13–15

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