



# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
September 12, 2021

## Changing Our Mentality

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Jesus presents a different way of seeing, hearing, and judging. It takes some getting used to!

Peter, as a good friend, wants to protect Jesus from the cross he is announcing. Yet Jesus doesn't want protection from the will of the Father—rather he wants support. He invites Peter to change his mentality.

Jesus knew what was coming; he must suffer and be rejected. Suffering and rejection are not absolute evils. Our goal in life can't be to avoid suffering and to be accepted by everyone. If we pursue good and follow Jesus, we will also experience rejection. When Jesus tells us that following him means taking up our cross,

it shouldn't surprise us when a cross is planted in our path with a sign saying, "Pick me up."

In the first reading, the prophet says he opened his ear and didn't rebel. When the consequences of this faith were abuse and rejection, he didn't shield his body and face. He could do so because, like Jesus, he was rooted in love and not fear. He didn't fear their arguments, ideas, and insults. He didn't fear what they could do to his body, for they couldn't touch his soul, his heart, his freedom.

When we know we are loved, and are following what is right, we have a confidence and a strength that the world knows not.

It is a different way of seeing, hearing, and judging. It is of a higher order, a deeper source, and brings total peace. And it takes some getting used to! +

## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 50:4c-9a

I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who tore out my beard.

### James 2:14-18

Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

### Mark 8:27-35

[Jesus said,] "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

*Our goal in life can't be to avoid suffering and to be accepted by everyone.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

You may know all the commandments, all the prophecies, all the truths of the faith, but if this isn't put into practice, is not translated into works, it serves nothing....A faith without works, a faith that doesn't get you involved, isn't faith. It's words and nothing more than words.

—Homily, February 21, 2014



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- When amidst situations of opposition, do I find my peace in Jesus and the truth?
- What might steal my peace? Talk to Jesus about it and look for a solution in his gospel of the cross.

# Stop. Pray. Stay!

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR

**M**y older sister is a Felician sister in Livonia, MI. During a visit some weeks after she entered the convent, our family was given a tour of the motherhouse. Everywhere there were paintings and statues of Jesus, Mary, St. Francis, and Blessed Mary Angela, the Felician founder. All were very nice, but one image in particular got our attention. We stood still, silent. None of us had ever seen anything like it.

It was a statue of Jesus after the scourging at the pillar. He was almost life-size, crowned with thorns, covered with bloody wounds, and robed in purple. His appearance was so moving that we couldn't help but linger there. And as we did, the kind sister guiding our tour told us about a child from the Montessori, which is staffed by the sisters on the motherhouse grounds. Upon seeing the statue, the child blurted, "I hope the police know about this." The power of that image was undeniable.

It has been a long time since that day at the motherhouse. I've seen many pictures of Jesus, Mary, and the saints since then. But none made me want to stop and pray and stay there, lingering. Sadly, a lot of religious art is less than beautiful or inspiring. It doesn't evoke any reaction, except maybe boredom or nostalgia. The image of Divine Mercy is overused. T-shirts of the immaculate conception are sold by the thousands. Coffee mugs of the Sacred Heart clutter every rectory kitchen.



If you page through religious catalogs or go online, what you find is kitsch, the dull repetition of images and figures that no longer speak to our graphically astute, million-pixeled, ultracolored, high-definition reality. The visual world around us has grown by leaps and bounds, each day more and more striking, with evocative, heart-stopping, breathtaking images, while religious, devotional art has stayed mired in the past, gradually slipping into irrelevance. Whatever happened to good Catholic art? How did the Church that gave birth to the ceiling paintings of the Sistine Chapel come to settle for "good ol' plastic Jesus?"

Maybe there's a connection between the abandonment of popular devotion

and the demise of good Catholic art. During the 1960s and '70s—the time when much religious art was removed from churches and stored in warehouses, sold, or destroyed—many Catholics were also told that there was no room for their beloved popular devotions in our modern times.

Iconoclasm, the rejection and removal of religious art, for many meant the simultaneous loss of cherished prayers, novenas, and devotions. Only recently, with the resurgence of interest in devotions like the rosary and the chaplet of Divine Mercy, have we seen a return to Catholic art. As popular devotions find new life in the Church today, isn't it time to give new life to Catholic art, too? But not by resurrecting and reproducing old art from a time that will never return. We need new Catholic art that will make us stop and pray and stay today. +

*Is Catholic art  
a thing of the past?*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I am grateful for the gift  
of faith. Help me to practice  
what I believe in my heart.*

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

## WEEKDAY READINGS

September 13–18

**Monday**, St. John Chrysostom:  
1 Tm 2:1–8 / Lk 7:1–10

**Tuesday**, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross:  
Nm 21:4b–9 / Phil 2:6–11 / Jn 3:13–17

**Wednesday**, Our Lady of Sorrows:  
1 Tm 3:14–16 / Jn 19:25–27 or Lk 2:33–35

**Thursday**, Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian:  
1 Tm 4:12–16 / Lk 7:36–50

**Friday**, Weekday:  
1 Tm 6:2c–12 / Lk 8:1–3

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
1 Tm 6:13–16 / Lk 8:4–15

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