



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
September 19, 2021

Jesus' Cleansing Love

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The Master of Fossa, a painter of unknown name, traveled the Umbrian region in the 1300s, creating works of Franciscan spirituality. His triptych panel, *Stories of the Passion*, interprets the scenes of the passion and death of Christ as an act of service to poor sinners. The souls of his brothers and sisters were dirty. And yet he comes down from heaven, bends over our iniquity, and gently takes us into his hands while nursing us back to cleanliness and life.

Christ's greatness is revealed in his service. "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant

of all" (Mark 9:35). Jesus didn't wish to be first; he merely wished to be faithful. His goal was to love the Father and win us back, and that meant service and the cross.

In a detail of the painting, Peter is on his papal throne while Jesus kneels in front of him. What a role reversal! Peter should be washing Jesus' feet, but no. Even Peter tried to reject this act of service, but Jesus insisted—or else Peter could have no part in his reign.

Peter needed to be washed and purified before serving and sanctifying others. So it is with us. During this Mass, allow your soul to be taken into Jesus' hands. Feel him cleanse you, pouring his warm grace over your wounds. Accept his gentle, loving attention as he caresses, dries, and restores you. Only when you have known his mercy and love can you then be an agent of that love to others. +

A Word from Pope Francis

The *Catechism* firmly states that human power has limits and that "it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly." All such use and experimentation "requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation."

—On Care for Our Common Home (*Laudato Si'*), May 24, 2015



Sunday Readings

Wisdom 2:12, 17–20

With violence and torture let us put him to the test / that we may have proof of his gentleness.

James 3:16—4:3

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice.

Mark 9:30–37

[Jesus said,] "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- Do I take the time to place myself in Jesus' presence and receive his healing touch?
- The sacrament of reconciliation is a privileged moment of healing. Do I take advantage of this grace?

Wise Christian Stewardship

By Kathleen M. Basi

“God gave you a body so you can do good things in the world. And you can’t do that if you don’t take care of your body.” This is a pretty common refrain in my parenting arsenal. It is intended to be an entry-level lesson on sexuality, but in fact it’s a pretty universal concept: We have a responsibility to use what we have been given wisely.

When we hear the words “Christian stewardship,” we tend to reduce it to “time, talent, and treasure”—specifically, to our gift to the Church. Yet as important as that is, it’s not the whole story.

Christian stewardship means the wise use of everything we have and everything we are. It means care of the earth: picking up litter, not running the car while I check my phone in the parking lot, recycling, reusing plastic bags, turning the thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer, shopping consignment, and using The Freecycle Network, which coordinates a worldwide network of “gifting groups” to divert reusable goods from landfills.

It means care of relationships: turning off the electronics and focusing on each other, playing games together, eating dinners together, and supporting each other’s endeavors.

It means being aware of how much I have—home, running water, electricity, and especially my own unique talents and charisms—and embracing the



responsibility to share that wealth with others.

If my charism is a love of children, it might mean offering a stressed-out mother a few hours off. It might even mean taking kids for a whole weekend to allow another couple a weekend to reconnect.

If my charism is physical strength, it might mean helping a neighbor fix a broken step or replace a faucet. It might mean mowing the yard for an elderly or sick acquaintance, or someone overwhelmed by circumstances.

If my charism is cooking, it might mean meals for new mothers or families facing loss, extended illness, or emotional stress.

If my charism is joy and the gift of gab, it might mean visiting shut-ins, nursing homes, and retirement centers.

When “time and talent” Sunday comes around, we naturally focus on how to give back to God through the Church. Our parishes can function only if we share our gifts. But the responsibility of Christian stewardship doesn’t end there. The Church can grow only if we evangelize—and actions, as the old adage says, speak louder than words.

God gave us our bodies; we honor him by using them to do good things on the earth in his name. +

*Giving of our time,
talent, and treasure is
only part of the story.*

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful that you are my advocate. Take away all my fears and doubts. Fill me with your wisdom and love that I may be an instrument of your peace in the world.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 20–25

Monday, Sts. Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn, Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, and companions:
Ezr 1:1–6 / Lk 8:16–18

Tuesday, St. Matthew:
Eph 4:1–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:9–13

Wednesday, Weekday:
Ezr 9:5–9 / Lk 9:1–6

Thursday, St. Pius of Pietrelcina:
Hg 1:1–8 / Lk 9:7–9

Friday, Weekday:
Hg 2:1–9 / Lk 9:18–22

Saturday, Weekday:
Zec 2:5–9, 14–15a / Lk 9:43b–45

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