



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
October 17, 2021

Contemplating Jesus

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The painting in the Vatican, *Christ the Redeemer*, is totally Christ-centered, as is our Scripture passage. He is the dominant subject placed dramatically in the center of Correggio’s composition, seated on a throne of clouds. His kingdom is not of the world, and neither are his priorities: “Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all” (Mark 10:44).

Jesus is strongly self-confident in his pose, yet sweet and inviting in his facial features. He is a king and a friend. His upper body is set, but his lower body is actively moving forward with his leg

stepping toward us. He sits to receive and rule but is willing to step down and wash the soiled feet of his disciples.

It’s good to pause and reflect on this Jesus who calls us to follow him. As a man, he preached like no one before or since. Two millennia later we are still talking about him. He possessed such power and dignity that soldiers sent to arrest him wouldn’t dare lay hands on him. Kings (Herod), politicians (Pilate), churchmen (Pharisees), lawyers (scribes), civil servants (tax collectors), simple laborers (apostles), soldiers (at the cross), hardened sinners (prostitutes), and the poor were overcome by his compassion, authority, and character. Religious and pagans, men and women, children and the elderly—all were enraptured by his purpose and passion.

This amazing figure is the one who calls you and loves you! Spend time contemplating the beauty and moral integrity of this Jesus and give thanks that he has set his eyes and heart on you. +

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 53:10–11

My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, / their iniquity he shall bear.

Hebrews 4:14–16

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way.

Mark 10:35–45 or 10:42–45

[Jesus said,] “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

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A Word from Pope Francis

The way of service is the most effective antidote against the disease of seeking first place.... Therefore, as disciples of Christ, let us receive this Gospel passage as a call to conversion, in order to witness with courage and generosity a Church that bows at the feet of the least, in order to serve them with love and simplicity.

Angelus, October 21, 2018



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What aspect of the person of Jesus Christ most attracts you?
- What is it about you that attracts Jesus? Ask him.

Mountaintop Moments

By Kathleen M. Basi

One of my favorite hymns begins, “’Tis good, Lord, to be here!” Text writer Joseph A. Robinson captured what it must have felt like to witness the transfiguration of Jesus. Peter wanted to build a memorial on the site; Luke, in perhaps the first recorded facepalm in history, simply writes, “But he did not know what he was saying” (Luke 9:33).

We’re a lot like Peter, really. We catch a glimpse of the glory of God, and it’s so overwhelming that we don’t know how to process it properly. It doesn’t fit into our neat categories: good, bad, happy, sad. All we know, as Robinson wrote, is that we want to “hold the vision bright and make this hill our own.”

Mountaintop moments happen when we’re pulled out of our ordinary. We encounter them on retreat, at parish missions, and in moments of fundamental transition: birth, death, an earth-shattering diagnosis. God seems closer. Life seems bathed in the glow of new insight. Everything seems so clear. So simple.

Yet we all know the hard part comes later, when it’s time to weave new insight into the well-worn routines—even ruts—that comprise our daily existence.

Some days we find ourselves exquisitely aware of God’s redeeming love. We understand what that means, and we know just what we must do to reflect that love and redemption out into our small corner of the kingdom.

The next day, the glory that seemed



so all-encompassing gets buried by lack of sleep, cranky kids (or spouses, or students, or bosses!)—even shifting hormones.

Small wonder that we, like the disciples, want to build memorials to the great spiritual highlights of our lives. We hope somehow it will help us hold on to that moment of clarity, a snapshot in time when seeing was believing and discipleship required only that we stand still and be present.

Unfortunately, that’s not how it works. Insight might happen on the mountaintops, but growth doesn’t. Growth happens when insight encounters resistance. If we enshrine our moments in a sterile place, untouched by

the messiness of the real world, they will grow stale and impotent.

Mountaintop experiences become powerful when they butt up against the murky valleys of life and shine some of that sublime glory upon the comfortable, familiar darkness. That is why the last stanza of Joseph Robinson’s hymn always moves me to tears:

*’Tis good, Lord, to be here.
Yet we may not remain;
But since thou bidst us
leave the mount,
Come with us to the plain.*

+

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your gift of humility. Give me a humble heart so that I may imitate your compassionate ways with all people.

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 18–23

Monday, St. Luke: 2 Tm 4:10–17b / Lk 10:1–9

Tuesday, Sts. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, and Companions:
Rom 5:12, 15b, 17–19, 20b–21 / Lk 12:35–38

Wednesday, Weekday: Rom 6:12–18 / Lk 12:39–48

Thursday, Weekday:

Rom 6:19–23 / Lk 12:49–53

Friday, Weekday:

Rom 7:18–25a / Lk 12:54–59

Saturday, Weekday:

Rom 8:1–11 / Lk 13:1–9

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