



# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
September 22, 2024

## The Price of Goodness

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

We all know genuinely good people. Somehow, they are able to live the virtues of their religious tradition. It might even appear that it is easy for them to do so. One would think that such good people would be valued. Well, yes and no. While we might truly value the goodness of others, that goodness can also shame us. And there is the rub. People are uncomfortable with the realization that they are not as good as they think—or not as good as others might view them. Today’s readings underscore the price we might have to pay for such goodness.

The first reading describes a plot being devised to get rid of a righteous person whose goodness has become “annoying” (Wisdom 2:12). This is not someone who flaunts goodness; it is a genuinely good person, one who is referred to as “the righteous one” (2:18). (Here “son of God” simply means someone belonging to the people of God.) The plotters insist that God will come to the rescue if the righteous one is truly good. The petitions in the psalm response are placed on the lips of that righteous one. Like many good Bible stories, this story is open ended. We do not know what happens. The price paid for righteousness is found in the Gospel passage as well. Here the righteous one is Jesus. Though we know how his story ends, here the disciples did not.

Today we are faced with the starkness of these stories. Are we willing to pay the price of goodness? †

**While we might truly value the goodness of others, that goodness can also shame us.**



## 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.”

## A Word from Pope Francis

If you want to be first, you need to get in line, be last, and serve everyone. Through this shocking phrase, the Lord inaugurates a reversal: he overturns the criteria about what truly matters.... Greatness and success in God’s eyes are measured...by service. Not on what someone *has*, but on what someone *gives*. Do you want to be first? Serve.

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you ever resent the goodness of others?
- Does that goodness challenge you to be better?

# Consider Yourself at Home

John Shea

A big part of Sunday is going to a building without a second floor. There may be a balcony or a choir loft, but basically the ground floor of the church is the only floor. The altar and pulpit are elevated so people can see, but other than that it is a prairie. The shopping-bag lady and the real estate man and the cop in uniform and the blind guy who everybody helps to Communion and you and Ralph the twit all stand and kneel and sit next to each other—as if we had something in common. On Sunday, you know you belong. You might not be happy with those to whom you belong, but you are not in the Lost and Found department. An entire group of motley people has arrived with a claim check.

Some have suggested that the Sunday



gospel should be thrown like a rock. This is their image for the powerful way the gospel can shatter normal ways of thinking and acting. The most celebrated place where the good news hits like a rock is “Love your enemies.” The

injunction to love our enemies is meant to disorient our taken-for-granted world of enemies and friends. Upon hearing it, it might stop people long enough to find other ways. They might pause and question the natural way they divide the world into friends and enemies. They may brainstorm creative ways to invite perceived enemies into dialog. They may pour considerable ingenuity into the ways of peace rather than strategies of greater aggression. But in order for this to happen, Christians must face squarely the good news that they can and must change. Sunday is solidarity, even after we have been lost or have run away or just have been gone too long for reasons we can no longer remember. Sunday is the day we know there is nothing between us but the walls we build. †

## Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “Stewardship: Seeing Lazarus the Beggar In Those We Encounter” by Randy Hain

As we reflect on the many references to almsgiving in Scripture, we see that in biblical times, people were most likely seeing, touching, and talking directly with the people to whom they were giving alms and showing mercy. Today, however, thanks to factors like population growth, economic segregation within our cities, physical distance, and advances in technology, our almsgiving and acts of mercy are too often reduced to a point-and-click exercise on the computer. I’m not negating the impact of giving money, but I want to also stress that being physically present and making a concerted effort to reach out to others can help us diminish the risk of losing our basic humanity. †

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*Righteous God, inspire us today to imitate those who are good to us and pray for those whose behavior is harmful to others. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

September 23–28

**Monday**, St. Pius of Pietrelcina:

Prv 3:27–34 / Lk 8:16–18

**Tuesday**, Weekday:

Prv 21:1–6, 10–13 / Lk 8:19–21

**Wednesday**, Weekday:

Prv 30:5–9 / Lk 9:1–6

**Thursday**, Weekday:


Eccl 1:2–11 / Lk 9:7–9

**Friday**, St. Vincent de Paul:

Eccl 3:1–11 / Lk 9:18–22

**Saturday**, Weekday:

Eccl 11:9–12:8 / Lk 9:43b–45

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