



Bringing Home the Word

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
August 7, 2022

Finding Our Treasure in God

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Abraham is considered our father in faith because he practiced his faith even when it didn't seem sensible to do so. His faith allowed him to obey God and to hope in him despite an apparent lack of evidence of God's fidelity. And because of his faith, Abram became Abraham, the Father of nations, the common ancestor of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim peoples.

Abraham understands that no creature, no gift, should take God's place

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 18:6–9

The expectation of your people was the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of their foes.

Hebrews 11:1–2, 8–19 or
Hebrews 11:1–2, 8–12

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.

Luke 12:32–48 or **Luke 12:35–40**

[Jesus said,] "Sell your belongings and give alms For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."

in the human heart—even something as dear as a God-given child. This is the absolute, total trust God asks of us. When dealing with all the good things God gives us, including those he has promised and those we love most, we must be willing to trust what he asks of us. God doesn't always make sense right away, and we're often painfully aware that his ways are not our ways.

Have you ever been caught in a storm—perhaps a really scary storm with wind howling, rain pounding, skies so dark it looks like night in the middle of the day? This is how the winds of our passions, and the pressure of our secret expectations can clash with God's plans for us. A darkened front moves into our soul, making it difficult to hear God's voice and see the light of his will. Here lies the heroism of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight.

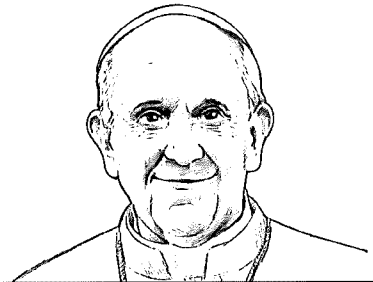
For this reason, Abraham is the faithful servant found doing the Master's will. His treasure was in God.

***Abraham understands
that no creature, no gift,
should take God's place
in the human heart.***

A Word from Pope Francis

In dark moments, in sad moments [Jesus] is well aware that our faith is weak—all of us are people of little faith, all of us, myself included, everyone.... [O]ur journey can be troubled, hindered by adverse forces. But ... He is the Lord who passed through death in order to lead us to safety.

Angelus, August 9, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I thank God every day for all that is good in my life?
- Is there anything more important to me than doing God's will?

A Be-attitude Adjustment

By William Clark, OMI

We all want to be happy. The Declaration of Independence affirms the pursuit of happiness as “an inalienable right with which all men are endowed by their creator.” Someone once remarked that the tricky thing about the pursuit of happiness is knowing when you’ve caught up.

What actually makes a person happy? What constitutes happiness? Human beings always want more, and when we have more we want better, and when we have better we want different.

The super-rich want more than one mansion or a bigger boat. The ordinary person wants a nicer house, a newer car. The poor person desperately wants a job and income to provide the necessities of life. The object may vary, but the desire for more or better or different is always there. As long as our desires are not guided by reason enlightened by faith, we can never be truly happy.

We don’t automatically come upon the secrets of our happiness. Over the course of history, various systems aimed at achieving happiness have been proposed. For Gautama Buddha, the only means to happiness lies in the elimination of desire. Early Greek philosophers thought the solution was to seek a balance in one’s longings. But neither the Buddhist mystic nor the Greek philosopher can achieve complete success. The calm achieved by the Buddhist is always subject to disturbance



by recurring desires. The Greek philosopher’s balance is necessarily an arbitrary standard and is always liable to change.

The Christian knows where true happiness lies. The Christian knows it’s found in directing our desires toward God. One Christian expression of where happiness lies can be found in the beatitudes, listed in the Gospel of Matthew. (See 5:3–12.)

Scripture scholars agree that it’s difficult to find an adequate translation for the word that begins each beatitude. It’s usually translated as “blessed,” but a good case can be made for translating it as “made happy.” In any case, the beatitudes

are both expressions of grace and implicit commands leading to happiness.

From a purely natural viewpoint, the beatitudes do not make sense. In faith we ask for the grace to understand. How does being poor in spirit make one happy? How does mourning or being meek make one happy? Who is truly happy when hungry and thirsty, even if it be for righteousness? From a natural viewpoint, purity of heart/chastity is, as the ancient Romans put it, “a virtue greatly to be admired...in others.” Peacemakers are often shot at from both sides. Finally, how does being persecuted make one happy?

Clearly, the beatitudes become a formula for happiness only when viewed with the eyes of faith—eyes that look beyond this world.

The Christian knows where true happiness lies. The Christian knows it’s found in directing our desires toward God.

PRAYER

Generous God, we give you thanks for all our blessings and dare to ask for one thing more: a grateful heart. We pray always in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 8–13

Monday, St. Dominic:
Ez 1:2–5, 24–28c / Mt 17:22–27


Tuesday, Weekday:
Ez 2:8—3:4 / Mt 18:1–5, 10, 12–14

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

Thursday, St. Clare:
Ez 12:1–12 / Mt 18:21–19:1

Friday, Weekday: Ez 16:1–15, 60, 63 or
Ez 16:59–63 / Mt 19:3–12

Saturday, Weekday:
Ez 18:1–10, 13b, 30–32 / Mt 19:13–15

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Bringing Home the Word

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
August 14, 2022

We Are All Prophets

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Persecution is part of a prophet's life. Their strong messages are rarely met with open hearts even if conversion, rather than confrontation, is what the prophet seeks. Bartholomew, one of the Twelve Apostles, was preaching in India and Turkey in the first century and converted the Armenian king. But the king's brother had Bartholomew flayed alive. Jeremiah foretold the destruction of Jerusalem unless the people returned their hearts to the Lord. This call to conversion was considered demoralizing for those who wished to continue in

their self-centered ways. His words were even crushing the soldiers! Either Jeremiah was quite the preacher, the soldiers were guilty—or both!

The fire of the prophet's words is meant as a call to action for the soul caught up in lukewarm stagnation. They should be uncomfortable.

When more than 2,000 bishops reflected on the Church at Vatican II, they insisted that every baptized Christian has a prophetic mission. We're called to shake things up. The role of the prophet is to examine in prayerful observation the signs of the times, and to read into them calls to action. Prophets listen with one ear to the Lord and another to society in order to speak wisely to their contemporaries.

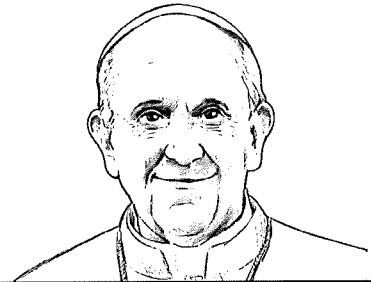
This call to preach whether convenient or inconvenient was experienced by Christ. The flame that burned in his bosom was a desire to turn hearts toward his Father. Jesus didn't back down from preaching out of fear of rejection of the truth. Neither should we.

***Prophets listen
with one ear to the Lord
and another to society
in order to speak wisely
to their contemporaries.***

A Word from Pope Francis

Today too, the world needs to see *prophets* in the Lord's disciples, that is, people who are courageous and persevere in responding to the Christian vocation. People who follow the "drive" of the Holy Spirit, who sends them to proclaim hope and salvation to the poor and the excluded...

Angelus, February 3, 2019



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- Are there ways I have become of the world and need to be more of the gospel?
- Am I willing to make a stand for righteousness, even if it makes me unpopular?

Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 38:4–6; 8–10

"[Jeremiah] ought to be put to death. He is weakening the resolve of the soldiers...and of all the people, by saying such things to them."

Hebrews 12:1–4

Consider how [Jesus] endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

Luke 12:49–53

[Jesus said,] "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!"

Let There Be Peace on Earth

By Paige Byrne Shortal

The world changes, and it's changing faster all the time. My husband and I like to make note of the things we say today that would make no sense to people just fifty years ago. "I Googled it," for example. Or "You can read his blog on Facebook." Or my husband's favorite: "I can't find my phone."

Some time ago I read a note from my children's school that would have mystified my grandparents. It read, "We are asking you to provide a nonperishable snack to be stored in your child's homeroom in the event of a security lockdown." *Security lockdown?*

A few days later I was talking with some other moms. One remarked that her son is still terrified of the school fire drill (he hates noise), but he doesn't have any trouble with the lockdown drill. I must have looked confused, so she elaborated. When the principal announces "Code Red" over the PA system, the teacher dims the lights and locks the door while the kids hurry into the closet. In rooms without a closet, there is a designated hiding place where they can't be seen through the glass in the hall door. The teacher closes the window blinds and joins the huddled kids until the all-clear is sounded.

Maybe the world doesn't change nearly enough. Our elders endured their 9/11, which they called Pearl Harbor, followed by yet another War to End All Wars; their economic meltdown, which



they called the Crash, was followed by the Great Depression.

Today we prepare for terrorist attacks and send snacks for our children to eat in the closet. When I was in grade school, we practiced "duck and cover" drills in the event of nuclear war. I wasn't traumatized by those rehearsals because, as I realize now, the adults in charge did a good job of maintaining a sense of normalcy.

We're made for peace and goodwill, and if we can't have peace and goodwill, we at least try to keep our children innocent and untroubled, even if it means making a game out of the unthinkable and providing a snack for

the end of the world.

God promises to make all things new. Forecast in Isaiah, confirmed in the Book of Revelation, we are assured that God will wipe every tear from our eyes "and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain" (21:4). Until then, we must be as much like God as possible—feeding our little ones, creating peace, doing the best we can to make the world as it should be.

If we can't have peace and goodwill, we at least try to keep our children innocent and untroubled....


PRAYER

Saving God, when the world is frightening, when we worry about those we love, help us to remember that you love them even more. We pray always in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 15–29

Monday, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Rev 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab / 1 Cor 15:20–27 / Lk 1:39–56

Tuesday, Weekday:

Ez 28:1–10 / Mt 19:23–30

Wednesday, Weekday:

Ez 34:1–11 / Mt 20:1–16

Thursday, Weekday:


Ez 36:23–28 / Mt 22:1–14

Friday, Weekday:

Ez 37:1–14 / Mt 22:34–40

Saturday, St. Bernard:

Ez 43:1–7ab / Mt 23:1–12

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Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
August 21, 2022

Just Come In the Side Door

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A fragment from a church ceiling fresco crumbled and fell to the ground. It was eventually added to the Vatican collection. A piece of rubble that is now a priceless object of art depicts an apostle as he gazes upwards towards Christ's divine glory.

We too are striving to attain that heavenly vision, and in today's Gospel, Jesus advises us on how to realize it. We should strive to enter the smaller gate, the narrow door. It's not the grand main entrance that everyone sees and knows about. The narrow door is a less-traveled

side entrance that only those who are close to the owner and his family know. Christ invites us to be so familiar with him that we know the side door.

Many pass the Master's house, know where it is, but have lost the practice of stopping inside. They know about God, even pray occasionally, and don't hurt anyone. No doubt not hurting others is admirable, but there is so much more for someone baptized into Christ. We're not called to merely avoid hurting others, but to have a deep, transforming experience of healing love that we then share with others.

Jesus' warning seems to be that when there is a mad rush to enter the front gate, those well-intentioned but out-of-practice souls who "don't know him" might find themselves struggling to squeeze in.

Jesus and the Church don't want that to happen to anyone. He invites us to get familiar, stop in often. He might say, "When you get here, just come in the side door!"

*The narrow door is a
less-traveled side entrance
that only those who are
close to the owner and
his family know.*

A Word from Pope Francis

[Faith] means that you show the revelation, so that the Holy Spirit might work in people through witness.... If I say that I am a Christian, but I live like a pagan, that doesn't work, that doesn't convince anyone. If I say that I am a Christian, and I live like a Christian, this attracts.

Homily, Rome, April 25, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I prioritize getting to know our Lord in prayer?
- Do I live the words I hear and speak at Mass?

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 66:18-21

[Thus says the Lord,] "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; they shall come and see my glory."

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines.

Luke 13:22-30

[Jesus said,] "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."

Walk the Talk

By Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR

Every week, Catholics recite a common creed that binds us in one faith. I've been thinking about personal creeds. What creed do I live? What creed do others infer from my actions, words, and deeds? What if God will judge us not on what we recite at weekly Mass, but on what we do the rest of the week? What if we will be convicted by our convictions?



- If I believe sacred Scripture is the inspired Word of God, and yet I don't read and study the Bible, then I refuse to hear God.
- If I believe in plentiful redemption, and yet I fail to forgive myself, then I deny that God is all-loving.
- If I believe God created the heavens and the earth, and yet I fail to care for the environment, then I am abusing the offspring of God.
- If I believe God is the creator of all life, and yet I believe an unborn child is a choice, then I make my God an inconvenience.
- If I believe humankind was created in God's image, and yet act as if any race or gender is superior to another, then I proclaim God to be fickle and imperfect.
- If I believe in the primacy of conscience, and yet I fail to learn the teachings of the Church, then I'm a rudderless ship adrift in a sea of troubles.
- If I believe Christ will judge the living and the dead, and yet I spend my days judging the faults of others, then I have surely usurped the throne of my King.
- If I believe the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity, and yet I spend all my days stifling the Spirit, then I have muzzled my God.
- If I believe in the Real Presence, and yet I am not transformed by holy Communion, then I deny Christ's admittance to the world.
- If I believe we are all sisters and brothers in Christ, and yet I fail to share my time, talent, and treasure, then I surely deny that Christ is my brother.

At Mass we profess the faith we believe. What faith are we professing by our actions?

PRAYER

Faithful God, grant me the grace to believe the truth, to speak what I believe, and to live what I speak. I pray in in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 22-27

Monday, The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary:
2 Thes 1:1-5, 11-12 / Mt 23:13-22


Tuesday, Weekday:
2 Thes 2:1-3a, 14-17/ Mt 23:23-26

Wednesday, St. Bartholomew:
Rev 21:9b-14 / Jn 1:45-51

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:1-9 / Mt 24:42-51

Friday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:17-25 / Mt 25:1-13

Saturday, St. Monica:
1 Cor 1:26-31 / Mt 25:14-30

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Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
August 28, 2022

The Power of Humility

by Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Humility isn't a popular virtue! In fact, among the Greeks and the Romans it wasn't considered a virtue at all. In a list of 147 wise maxims, dated six centuries before Christ, humility wasn't even mentioned. For the ancient Greek or Roman, honor was more of a goal than humility.

Yet the Jewish faith values humility, as illustrated in Old Testament texts like the one we hear today. The humble strength of conducting affairs quietly and justly makes one more loved—more so than someone who gives many gifts.

Sunday Readings

Sirach 3:17–18, 20, 28–29

My son, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.

Hebrews 12:18–19, 22–24a

[Y]ou have approached...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,...and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant....

Luke 14:1, 7–14

[Jesus said,] "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Parents should reflect on this.

As Christians following a Savior who stooped to wash feet, humility is not only recommended but becomes the ideal. Let the first be last. Let the greatest be the servant. Humility is simply living the truth of who we are. We are each both great and insignificant. We can and should use all our knowledge and strength to plant seeds for a better world. But only God gives the growth.

We are creatures and not the Creator. We don't make the rules of life or define right and wrong. We discover, accept, and embrace these laws. A healthy awareness of our limitations doesn't enslave us but sets us free. A humble knowledge of the truth is empowering.

We are amazingly talented people, each uniquely loved and gifted by God. Each of us can achieve, and should strive for, the greatness offered us. Humility makes one capable of true and lasting greatness—just look at Christ.

*Humility is simply living
the truth of who we are.
We are each both great
and insignificant.*

A Word from Pope Francis

Without humility we will never find God: we will find ourselves. Because a person who has no humility has no horizon in front of him or her. They only have a mirror: they look at themselves. Let us ask the Lord to break this mirror so we can look beyond, to the horizon, where He is.

General Audience, December 22, 2021



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How well do I know myself—both my strengths and my weaknesses?
- Do I see everything as a gift and respond with humility?

There But for the Grace of God Go I

By Fr. Stephen Rehrauer, CSsR

In Catholic school I learned to repeat the above phrase often. It expresses gratitude for having been spared the sufferings we see others endure. It arouses compassion, moving us to help others shoulder their burdens. If the suffering of others is the result of their own wrong behavior, it teaches humility and solidarity, reminding us that were it not for God's help, we might have fallen into the same wrong patterns of life, bringing similar disgrace upon ourselves.

Lately it seems this phrase has been replaced by a pair of more pernicious ones: "Thank God I'm better off than they are" and "Thank God they finally got what was coming to them."

Studies show that we tend not to help others if we believe they have been the cause of their own suffering. In responding to those whose lives have been ravaged by alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, poverty, hunger, AIDS, rape, violent crime, and murder, it matters a great deal to almost everyone whether we see that person as "deserving" or "undeserving" of their fate. When we believe someone has been innocently harmed, it elicits sympathy, which motivates us to help. On the other hand, if we believe that the other "deserves" what is happening as the result of something he or she did, then the emotion elicited is righteous indignation—even satisfaction—at seeing cosmic justice occur, and we



are motivated to deliberately withhold assistance. This tendency seems to be very common across all cultures. And then there's Jesus.

Turning away from another's pain, regardless of its causes, is hardly the moral response the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us. Sooner or later we all make wrong choices in our lives. Sometimes our wrong choices flow from a flaw in ourselves; sometimes we are overwhelmed by a situation and really can't see any other way out of the mess we are in; sometimes we just want something so much that we are willing to do whatever it takes to get it. Sin is a constant part of the human condition. Saint Paul reminds his readers constantly that all are sinners, all deserve condemnation, all stand in need of forgiveness, and all need Christ to help them. If God treated us the way we are tempted to treat one another, offering

compassion only to those who "deserve" it, there would be no hope for any of us.

God's justice is mercy. Grace is offered to the sinner precisely as a sinner: one who deserves condemnation and punishment through his own fault but who receives instead compassion and forgiveness. The sinner who returns causes rejoicing in heaven. It is precisely when we have been the cause of our own mess, and *because* we have been the cause of our own mess, that God draws near to us most powerfully and most lovingly in Christ, who is help for the helpless. This is God's *Caritas*. This is the God Jesus came to reveal.

If God ... offered compassion only to those who "deserve" it, there would be no hope for any of us.

**PRAYER**

Holy and compassionate God, teach us the freedom of humility, the gratification of surrender, the true joy of compassion for others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 29–September 3

Monday, The Passion of St. John the Baptist:
1 Cor 2:1–5 / Mk 6:17–29


Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Cor 2:10b–16 / Lk 4:31–37

Wednesday, Weekday:
1 Cor 3:1–9 / Lk 4:38–44

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Cor 3:18–23 / Lk 5:1–11

Friday, Weekday:
1 Cor 4:1–5 / Lk 5:33–39

Saturday, St. Gregory the Great:
1 Cor 4:6b–15 / Lk 6:1–5

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