

Sunday Message

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 4 August 2024 • Psalter Week 2



RECEIVING A MAKEOVER

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

A mainstay of reality tv is the makeover show, where participants or contestants are given a new look, a new image.

Hair might be styled or coloured differently, enhancing the participant's look, bringing out or highlighting their best features. Many are given a new wardrobe and tips on what to wear. In some cases, seeing the before and after pics is almost like looking at a different person. The transformative effect of good makeup and hairstyle and a new wardrobe can be extraordinary.

In today's second reading, St Paul urges the Christian community at Ephesus to get a makeover. He isn't offering fashion advice or suggesting major shopping trips to Rome or Athens. Rather he is talking about a transformation of mind and spirit. He tells the Ephesus community that, as Christians, they must live a new kind of life. They are to throw away the old self and put on the new self. They are to become whole new people in Christ. He is proposing not a surface makeover but a total transformation. Each person must be reformed, transformed, made new, so as to become Godly.

Paul knew what he was talking about. His own experience on the road to Damascus changed his life completely. He threw away the old self and put on the new self. He even got a new name. Through his encounter with the risen Lord, Paul's life had been upended utterly. Our encounter with the risen Lord, the Bread of Life, must transform our lives, too, making us new people. ■

LEARN

St Paul urges his readers not to live the aimless life of the pagans but rather to live in Christ. Putting on the new self means putting on God. It means knowing that Jesus is our Bread of Life, our food for life, who gives us everything that we need.

DO

Think about what you are doing when you receive the bread of life in Holy Communion. Answer "Amen" enthusiastically.



SAY

"Lord, never let me settle for anything less than to hunger for you who are the bread of life. Amen."

PRAY

Pray for yourself and for Christians everywhere for a deeper faith in Jesus, our food for life.

REFLECT

Many mornings in 1918 found Dorothy Day, a 21-year-old, radical New York reporter, stumbling home to bed, bleary-eyed and inebriated, after another night on the town. A firebrand, Dorothy had no interest in religion. Her interest was in revolution but in the half-light before dawn, as she stumbled home, she always encountered groups of people hurrying to early Mass at St Joseph's Church.

Curiosity got the better of her, and sometimes she would follow them inside and watch as they began their day in prayer. While it impressed her tremendously, she wasn't ready to change her ways. In the following years, she had an affair with a reporter, got pregnant, had an abortion, then moved on to another lover, all the time working as a reporter.

In 1926, when she got pregnant again, Dorothy's new lover insisted she abort this child too, but she refused. Those early morning encounters in church had left their mark, and she had begun to read about the Church and Christianity. Among the books she read was the autobiography of St

Therese of Lisieux, and so when her daughter was born, she named her Tamar Theresa. When she took her child to a Catholic church to be baptised, her lover dumped her. Soon afterwards, Dorothy herself became a Catholic.

Dorothy, the one-time political radical, now wanted to find a radical way to be a Christian and to do good. The answer came when she met a man called Peter Maurin, who shared her desire to build a new society rooted in the Gospels.

What began as a chat around a kitchen table in 1932 grew into a worldwide movement known as the Catholic Worker. Dorothy and Peter began by founding a newspaper. With her journalistic experience, she knew that a newspaper, sold at a penny a copy, would offer solidarity with the workers struggling with unemployment and harsh working conditions during the Great Depression. It would also be a way of promoting Catholic social teaching. Within two years, the paper had a circulation of 150,000.

The second part of the Catholic Worker programme grew from a belief that Houses of Hospitality should be established, where

anyone was welcome to share a meal - because the Gospel is all about hospitality. Word got around and, by 1936, hundreds were lining up at Dorothy's door every day where there was a pot of soup always on the go and volunteers ready to help. So great was the demand that soon they had to rent entire buildings to accommodate the numbers.

Dorothy was also active in the anti-war and civil rights movements. "Our manifesto," she wrote, "is the Sermon on the Mount."

Throughout the 50 years she spent ministering to the poor until her death in 1980, Dorothy Day had the deepest conviction that Christ was at the centre of it all and that only in him can genuine fulfilment be found. Through her personal encounter with Jesus all those years before, her life had changed completely. She had thrown away the old self and put on the new self. She had become a new person.

That's the challenge today's liturgy - and every liturgy - offers us, too. In the words of St Paul, we need a makeover. We must give up our old self and put on the new self that has been created in God. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O God, come to my assistance;
O Lord, make haste to help me!
You are my rescuer, my help;
O Lord, do not delay.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing
kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator
and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

A reading from the first book of Exodus.

The whole community of the sons of Israel began to complain against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and said to them, "Why did we not die at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat and could eat bread to our heart's content! As it is, you have brought us to this wilderness to starve this whole company to death!"

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now I will rain down bread for you from the heavens. Each day the people are to go out and gather the day's portion; I propose to test them in this way to see whether they will follow my law or not. "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Say this to them, 'Between the two evenings you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have bread to your heart's content. Then you will learn that I, the Lord, am your God.'"

And so it came about: quails flew up in the evening, and they covered the camp; in the morning there was a coating of dew all round the camp. When the coating of dew lifted, there on the surface of the desert was a thing delicate, powdery, as fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When they saw this, the sons of Israel said to one another, "What is that?" not knowing what it was. "That" said Moses to them 'is the bread the Lord gives you to eat.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 77 (78):3-4, 23-25, 54

Response:

The Lord gave them bread from heaven.

1. The things we have heard and understood, the things our fathers have told us, we will tell to the next generation: the glories of the Lord and his might. (R.)
2. He commanded the clouds above and opened the gates of heaven. He rained down manna for their food, and gave them bread from heaven. (R.)
3. Mere men ate the bread of angels. He sent them abundance of food. He brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won. (R.)

SECOND READING

Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

I want to urge you in the name of the Lord, not to go on living the aimless kind of life that pagans live. Now that is hardly the way you have learnt from Christ, unless you failed to hear him properly when you were taught what the truth is in Jesus. You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which gets corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;
no one can come to the Father except through me. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 6:24-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

When the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into boats and crossed to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they found him on the other side, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered:
"I tell you most solemnly,
you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs
but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat.

Do not work for food that cannot last,
but work for food that endures to eternal life,
the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you,
for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal."

Then they said to him, "What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?" Jesus gave them this answer, "This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent." So they said, "What sign will you give to show us that we should believe in you? What work will you do? Our fathers had manna to eat in the desert; as scripture says: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus answered:

"I tell you most solemnly,
it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven,
it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven,
the true bread;

for the bread of God
is that which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world."
"Sir," they said "give us that bread always."
Jesus answered:
"I am the bread of life.
He who comes to me will never be hungry;
he who believes in me will never thirst."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Graciously sanctify these gifts, O Lord, we pray,
and, accepting the oblation of this spiritual
sacrifice,
make of us an eternal offering to you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have given us, O Lord, bread from
heaven,
endowed with all delights and sweetness in
every taste.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord,
those you renew with these heavenly gifts
and, in your never-failing care for them,
make them worthy of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.