

Sunday Message

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

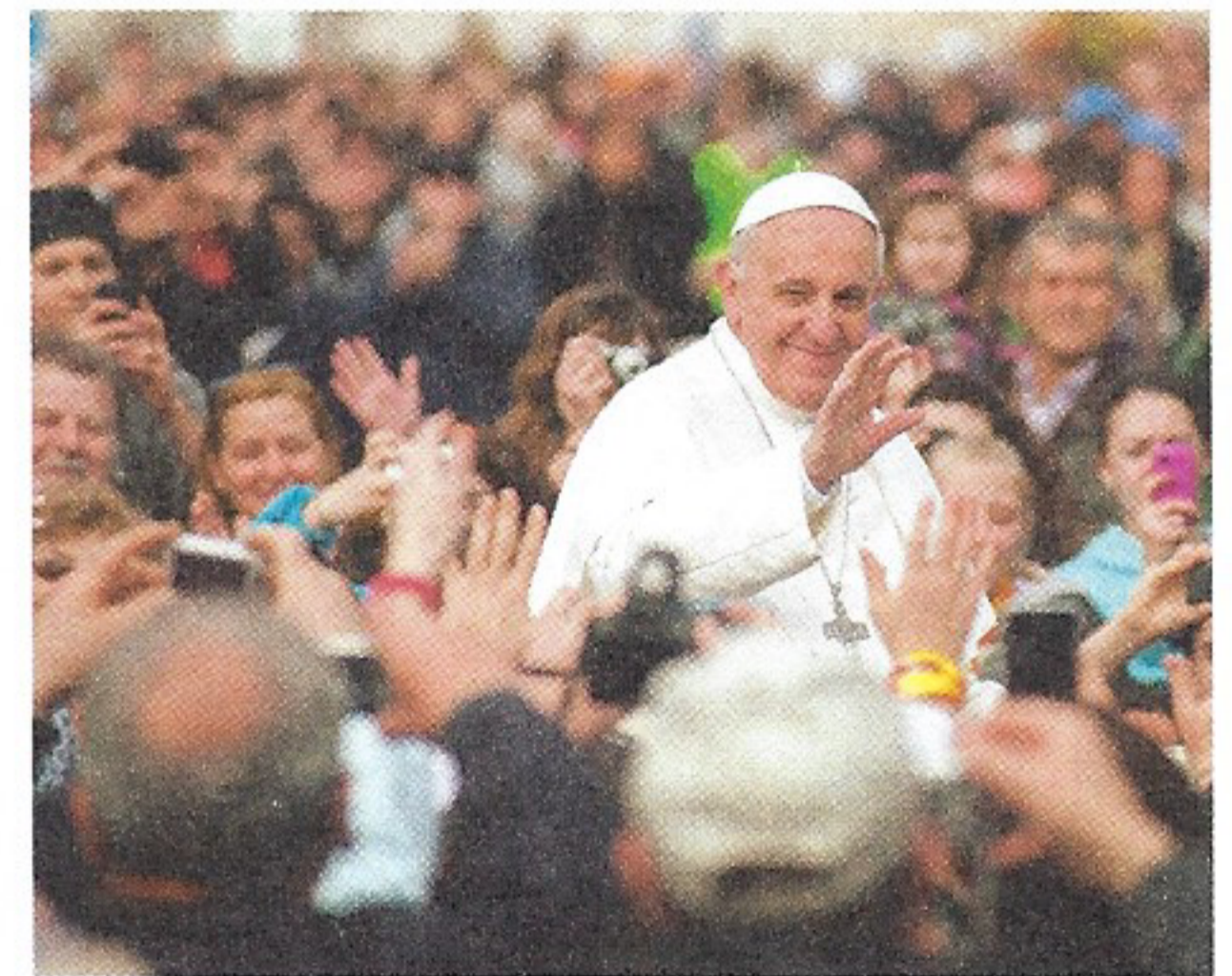
Year B • 22 September 2024 • Psalter Week 1



SAY

Leadership must enter into service, but with a personal love for the people.

(Pope Francis, 2014)



We might draw our minds back to last weekend's gospel reading, and the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah, but coupled with that is the fact that Jesus will also suffer. The news of his ultimate death is not palatable information for his disciples, who imagine Jesus sitting on a throne, being venerated as a King and Lord.

Today's Gospel is Jesus' second attempt to present the same information. Why the urgency from Jesus to get his message across? His ministry in Galilee is about to come to an end and the descent into Jerusalem is what awaits him and his followers. The disciples don't understand what he means by the prediction of his death and resurrection and they in turn are afraid to ask Jesus for further clarification. Instead, the conversation between them takes an interesting turn. They begin to argue about which one of them is the greatest, or in other words, which one should have the most power? This vying for position within such a diverse group could be considered as natural human behaviour. But for Jesus, this is a worrying sign. He uses the opportunity to teach them and challenges the disciples to accept a little child. When they can welcome the most vulnerable and weakest, they can welcome Jesus. ■

DO

Reflect on the leadership shown by members of your parish community. What positive aspects do they bring and what changes need to be made?

LEARN

Grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God.

(Catechism)

REFLECT

Robert Greenleaf, author of the best-selling book *Servant Leadership* writes:

"It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in

society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"

Jesus has been at pains to explain to the disciples the kind of leadership and service he requires of his followers. Putting others first and seeking out the outcast or marginalised of society is not just wise leadership advice, it is the truth about human life from the one who embodied it.

But Jesus doesn't just say it, he acts it out in a dramatic parable. He takes a little child who happened to be hanging around the house, picks the child up and embraces him or her in his arms. From our vantage point, this act seems cute. 'Aaawh, Jesus picks up

and hugs a child.' But it was not likely cute to Jesus' disciples. In his day, children were definitely 'seen but not heard.' Children weren't worth much until they grew up and proved themselves. They were considered nobodies. Their worth was tied up in their potential as adults, not in their being children. But here Jesus places a child in the centre and says, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.' It follows, that a new style of leadership and service is born. Instead of seeking power and prestige, seek out the weakest of our community and show them God's love. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord.
Should they cry to me in any distress,
I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

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

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. 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

Wisdom 2:12,17-20

A reading from the book of Wisdom.
The godless say to themselves,
"Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us and opposes our way of life, reproaches us for our breaches of the law and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing.
Let us see if what he says is true, let us observe what kind of end he himself will have.
If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.
Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, and thus explore this gentleness of his and put his endurance to the proof.
Let us condemn him to a shameful death since he will be looked after – we have his word for it."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 53 (54):3-6,8

Response:
The Lord upholds my life.

1. O God, save me by your name; by your power, uphold my cause. O God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth. (R.)
2. For proud men have risen against me, ruthless men seek my life. They have no regard for God. (R.)
3. But I have God for my help. The Lord upholds my life. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart and praise your name for it is good. (R.)

SECOND READING

James 3:16-4:3

A reading from the letter of St James.
Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.
Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don't have what you want is because you don't pray for it; when you do pray and don't get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the light of the world, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 9:30-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.
After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again." But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.
They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all." He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said to them, "Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."
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

Receive with favour, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept;
may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.