



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
September 4, 2022

A Love of First Preference

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Jesus is radical and absolute when speaking about his first preference for love. When Jesus says his disciples should “hate,” he means only that we should place God first in our hearts. And when God is first, we will actually love everyone else more and better. Saint Gregory comments on this passage: “In this world let us love everyone, even though he be our enemy; but let us hate him who opposes us on our way to God, though he be our relative. We should, then, love our neighbor; we should have charity towards all—towards relatives

and towards strangers—but without separating ourselves from the love of God out of love for them” (*Evangelia homiliae*, 37, 3).

Jesus’ words mean we cannot be halfhearted in our love for God or neighbors—even if our neighbor is an enemy. The very nature of love is to put others first. The first “other” is God himself.

Religious brothers and sisters living by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—as monks, hermits, or other forms of consecrated life—testify to the world that this radical, loving God is first above all things. They deserve our support and our imitation.

There are many ways to love God and neighbor. And everyone, regardless of job or title, vocation or station in life, can love. This Labor Day weekend, consider thinking about how you can better love those with whom you spend your workday: employees or supervisors, colleagues and customers, those who serve you and those you serve. +

***There are many ways
to love God and neighbor.
And everyone, regardless
of job or title, vocation or
station in life, can love.***

A Word from Pope Francis

Every injustice inflicted on a person who works tramples on human dignity and the dignity of the one who does this injustice... Today, join with many men and women...who fight for justice in the world of work, for those...who manage their businesses fairly, even if they themselves lose as a result.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 1, 2020



Sunday Readings

Wisdom 9:13–18b

Scarcely can we guess the things on earth, and only with difficulty grasp what is at hand; but things in heaven, who can search them out?

Philemon 9–10, 12–17

So if you regard me (Saint Paul) as a partner, welcome (Onesimus) as you would me.

Luke 14:25–33

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- While at work, do I live out my vocation as a disciple of Jesus?
- Am I living and working as I had hoped I would?

Good Housekeeping

By Fr. Stephen Rehrauer, CSSR

We seek the good. But not all “goods” are equal. Some are more important than others. People are more important and have greater value, and thus are “higher goods,” than, for example, furniture. A starving human being’s life is of greater value than private property. Learning to correctly distinguish between goods of higher and lower value is one part of forming our conscience.

Classical moral theory distinguishes between “true” or “authentic” goods and those that are merely “instrumental.” True goods are those that have value in and of themselves. They are worth seeking and realizing for their own sake: a dignified human life, love, fidelity to our relationships, truth, beauty, integrity, justice, friendship, wisdom, knowledge of God, and happiness. Instrumental goods are useful only as a means for attaining true goods.

Money is an instrumental good. As a medium of exchange, its only moral value lies in what we do with it. It can be sought and attained through good or evil means, and it can be used as a means for good or evil. It should only be used to pursue and attain authentic goods.

Although folk wisdom reminds us that money can’t buy happiness, many people find a kind of pseudo-happiness in attaining and amassing money based on the fantasy of what they can do with it—even if all they do with it is make more money. In being satisfied only



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We should not trade our relationships with people for wealth or power.

with possessing and accumulating more money, as if this were a good in itself, they cheat themselves of the opportunity to use their wealth for that which really and authentically satisfies.

Power is also an instrumental good. The pope, the president of the United States, and the father and mother of a family all have power and authority over others. That authority is an instrument that can be used to serve the authentic common good of others...or not. When

power itself is treated as an authentic good, holding onto power becomes a supreme value. This can breed corruption and despotism, disfiguring the moral life of the one who has power and harming those subjected to its use.

It is easy to confuse instrumental and authentic goods. We can treat money, power, and fame as if they were true goods and treat people as if they were instrumental goods. The Christian should never sacrifice authentic goods in the pursuit of lower goods. We should not trade our relationships with people for wealth or power; we should not sacrifice our personal integrity in the pursuit of comfort; we should not endanger the common good in the realization of our own personal desires. Christian moral life is a matter of having our priorities correctly ordered. +



Good and gracious God, encourage us in our work, calm us in our rest, and inspire us in our prayer. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 5–10

Monday, Weekday:

1 Cor 5:1–8 / Lk 6:6–11

Tuesday, Weekday:

1 Cor 6:1–11 / Lk 5:12–19

Wednesday, Weekday:

1 Cor 7:25–31 / Lk 6:20–26

Thursday, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Mi 5:1–4a or Rom 8:28–30 / Mt 1:1–16, 18–23 or Mt 1:18–23

Friday, St. Peter Claver:

1 Cor 9:16–19, 22b–27 / Lk 6:39–42

Saturday, Weekday: 1 Cor 10:14–22 / Lk 6:43–49



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
September 11, 2022

Sonship Restored

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Strangely enough and discouragingly often, we find the attitude of the older son in the Church. The righteous believers who have always belonged can be jealous and look down upon the poor sinner who comes at a later hour, receiving the same reward.

Yet, the attitude of all of us towards those who are spiritually, morally, or materially needy, should be that of the loving father in today's gospel. The sinner comes back in shame, weakness, and obvious failure. His very act of returning is a cry for help, support,

and understanding. The Father offers his mercy and compassion without questions, without an interrogation. His shoulder is never too proud, too hard or righteous to be refused as a pillow for the humiliated soul who returns ruined by sin.

Humanity is noblest when admitting its weakness. Humanity is greatest in its ability to show mercy and lift the downtrodden. The parent-child relationship is most beautiful when it is being reconciled and restored.

We should always rejoice at the return of a prodigal child and we should always honor a forgiving parental heart. "We must celebrate and rejoice," said the father in the gospel. If we are convinced of this, we now have a charge: Be prepared to forgive those who have hurt us. Be ready to open our hearts and our arms to embrace those who are seeking our acceptance, our understanding, our love. +

Sunday Readings

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Moses implored the LORD... "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel..." So the LORD relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people.

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15:1-32

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.

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when admitting its weakness.***

***Humanity is greatest
in its ability to show mercy
and lift the downtrodden.***

A Word from Pope Francis

When someone whose heart is synchronized with God's sees the repentance of a person, they rejoice, no matter how serious their mistakes may have been. They do not stay focused on errors, they do not point fingers at what they have done wrong, but rejoice over the good because another person's good is mine as well!

ANGELUS, ROME, MARCH 27, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- With whom do you most identify in the Gospel story: the sinful son, the jealous brother, or the loving father?
- Explain your selection.

Let God Out of the Box

By Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR

Christians believe that God is infinite and eternal, God stands outside the bounds of space and time. God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient. God is, as one of my favorite gospel songs says, “awesome.”

And yet, we often squeeze our infinite God into tiny boxes. I guess it's inevitable. It's pretty tough to visualize something that's beyond our understanding, hard to get a handle on the infinite. And there's nothing wrong with contemplating God in bite-sized portions—it's just that it becomes so easy to deny everything that doesn't fit into our little box.

Some insist God is male and deny any other possibility. The artwork of our Catholic tradition has so often portrayed God as an older white male that artwork portraying God in any other fashion is seen as false. It's very hard to get God out of that little box. The language we use to describe God in our liturgies is masculine, and any attempt to use feminine pronouns is usually met with hostility even though Catholic theology teaches us that to do so is perfectly acceptable (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 370). If God is truly all things, what's wrong with painting God as a young, black female?

Others have placed God in a box that restricts God's mercy. Each of us can probably think of a couple people we can't imagine being allowed into



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paradise for one reason or another. We build a box out of justice (our definition) and seal it with self-righteousness, imagining it will hinder the flow of God's limitless mercy to those we deem unworthy.

Some even limit God's mercy as it applies to themselves. God loves me whether I believe it or not, but not believing it greatly limits the effect God's love has on my life. Imagine yourself

drowning in the ocean. You've gone under twice; it's dark, and you're scared. Someone throws you a life preserver, but it lands behind you and you don't see it. To you, it doesn't exist. So even though it's only a few feet away, it cannot save your life, and you drown. Just so, if I deny God's mercy, then for all intents and purposes it doesn't exist in my universe.

The same is true if I deny God's love. It cannot help define who I am. It cannot change the opinion I have of myself. It cannot save me from myself. If we imagine that God acts and reasons the same way we do, we fail to see God's love and mercy that surround us. Shall we open ourselves to the wonder and mystery that is God? Shall we let God out of the box?



Merciful God, mindful of how much we are forgiven, please give us the grace to forgive those who have hurt us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 12–17

Monday, Weekday:

1 Cor 11:17–26, 33 / Lk 7:1–10

Tuesday, St. John Chrysostom:

1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a / Lk 7:11–17

Wednesday, Exaltation of the Holy Cross:

Nm 21:4b–9 / Phil 2:6–11 / Jn 3:13–17

Thursday, Our Lady of Sorrows:


1 Cor 15:1–11 / Jn 19:25–27 or Lk 2:33–35

Friday, Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian:

1 Cor 15:12–20 / Lk 8:1–3

Saturday, Weekday:

1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49 / Lk 8:4–15

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Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
September 18, 2022

Be Worthy of the Trust Given You

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Civil or religious authority should be a service. Public authority is conferred upon a person by election or appointment in order to promote the common good. Far from a career of self-aggrandizement, it's a call to place the good of others before one's own. For this reason we should obey the instruction of Saint Paul to Timothy and pray fervently for those in authority "that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life" (1 Timothy 2:2).

When speaking about the responsibility of the rich and those

in authority, Jesus places emphasis on trustworthiness. Those delegated authority are there to serve and to honor the confidence given them. That's why financial or political corruption is so grievous, for the person wins the trust of others only to misuse that trust by taking advantage of them. Nothing could be further from their mandate. And when trust is lost in public life and personal relationships, life becomes a walk through a valley of fear where we are governed by self-preservation. Truly then, we become what the Latins wrote: "Man is a wolf to man."

So be worthy of the trust placed in you by your colleagues and clients; neighbors, family, and friends. Be worthy of the confidence God has bestowed with all the talents he has given to use for the good of others. Make your life a responsible gift to others and rejoice in their flourishing more than your own! +

***Make your life
a responsible gift
to others.***

Sunday Readings

Amos 8:4-7

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done!

1 Timothy 2:1-8

I ask that...prayers...be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life.

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones.

A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus assures us that we are always in time to put right with good the harm done. Those who have caused tears, make someone happy; those who have wrongfully taken, give to those who are in need. By doing so, we will be commended by the Lord.

ANGELUS, ROME, SEPTEMBER 22, 2019



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I trustworthy with the authority and gifts I have received?
- Do I look more for my own progress and protection or that of others?

Do What You Say You're Going to Do

By Paige Byrne Shortal

There is a life lesson in today's Gospel: the person who can be trusted with minor matters, may be trusted with great matters. Likewise, if you can't manage the small stuff, then forget about dreaming big.

This may seem obvious, but we deny the obvious every day. For example, if we overspend our bank account, don't we imagine that having more money is the answer? For the very poor this may be true, but sometimes even those who are comfortable quickly spend their raise or bonus and before they know it, they're overdrawn. There are even winners of the lottery who, before they know it, find themselves with a negative bank balance. When it comes to money, no matter the amount, there are only three possibilities: spend what we have, spend more than we have, or spend less than we have.

Or think about folks whose houses are cluttered with too much stuff. Having a bigger house looks like the answer and yet it doesn't take long to fill up more closets.

We imagine that a "little lie" is okay. "Fibbing" we call it. Yet, fibbing here and cheating there and soon we're able to tell real whoppers without giving it much thought.

We imagine that "just a few" cookies while on our diet won't



Harmful habits usually start with small stuff and grow from there.

matter too much. Skipping our walk just for today can't hurt. Putting off until tomorrow the dishes—or our homework or writing a thank you note or returning a call—"just this once" doesn't matter. Missing Sunday Mass is OK if it's not every Sunday. Calling in sick when we need a break—well, everyone does it.

These are the habits of failure and

they all start with small stuff. When life seems to be in shambles or it feels like we are spiraling out of control, we might consider trying this: Let's do what we say we are going to do. Period. If we're not eating sweets, then don't eat them. If we're Catholic, we're obliged to go to Sunday Mass, so we go. If we own it and it's dirty, clean it. If we don't have the money, we don't buy it. If we said we'd meet someone at 3 PM, we don't show up at 3:10.

If we do what we say we're going to do, life becomes simpler, and we also feel better about how we are living it because we are keeping our word. We don't have to keep making the same decision over and over because that decision is already made. And we find ourselves becoming people who can be trusted with great matters. It starts with the small stuff. +



Faithful God, you keep your promises to us. Please give us the grace to keep our promises to you and to others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 19–24

Monday, Weekday:

Prv 3:27–34 / Lk 8:16–18

Tuesday, Sts. Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn,

Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, and Companions:

Prv 21:1–6, 10–13 / Lk 8:19–21

Wednesday, St. Matthew:

Eph 4:1–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:9–13

Thursday, Weekday:


Ecc 1:2–11 / Lk 9:7–9

Friday, St. Pius of Pietrelcina:

Ecc 3:1–11 / Lk 9:18–22

Saturday, Weekday:

Ecc 11:9–12:8 / Lk 9:43b–45

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Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
September 25, 2022

Aspire to Greatness

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

It's so easy to fall into complacency and not strive for greatness. When we're young, we may idealistically dream of reaching the heights of success, however we define that word. Then with time, maybe a few setbacks, one or two genuine hardships, we gradually settle for less and less. Eventually we're content with just getting by and we no longer embrace the arduous struggle upon the higher road that once attracted us.

The rich man of today's Gospel passage was also complacent. His wealth blinded him to the needs of Lazarus, a poor man he passed by and

Sunday Readings

Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Woe to those who are complacent in Zion!...They shall be the first to go into exile.

1 Timothy 6:11-16

You, man of God...pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.

Luke 16:19-31

There was a rich man... and lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus.

stepped over every time he entered his home. Even though he could have helped, he refused to do so. How could one be so blind as to have everything and not be willing to offer leftover food to someone in need?

God opposes complacency and settling for the easy and sensual. In today's first reading, God upbraids the rich for exactly that. They are too comfortable on their expensive, comfortable couches (Amos 6:4). In the second reading we hear Saint Paul challenge the young bishop Timothy to pursue high ideals such as righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, gentleness, and all other virtues. We should strive for them as well. How?

Jesus is the beautiful, timeless ideal of every soul aiming for perfect love. If we keep our eyes on him, we will never settle for anything but true greatness in the eyes of God. +

*How could one be so blind
as to have everything
and not be willing to offer
leftover food to someone
in need?*

A Word from Pope Francis

No one must be excluded. God's plan is essentially inclusive and gives priority to those living on the existential peripheries. Among them are many migrants and refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking. The Kingdom of God is to be built with them, for without them it would not be the Kingdom that God wants.

WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS,
SEPTEMBER 25, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I feel when I ponder today's readings: Challenged? Overwhelmed? Inspired?
- What is one thing I can do this week to serve those less fortunate?

Somebody's Knocking at Your Door

By Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR

His potato crop was failing. The rest of his crops were being seized by British landlords for payment of taxes. So in 1887 my great-grandfather, John Patrick Fitzmaurice, left County Kerry, Ireland, with little more than the clothes on his back and the knowledge that his brother had found work in America in St. Louis.

Although the days of the “coffin ships” were dwindling, the boat he boarded was hardly a luxury liner. Some passengers still died in transit. John felt lucky, though, for he had met Mary Cahilan, the love of his life, and together they would embark on a new life in a new land. But had they tried to immigrate forty years later, they would have been sent packing because from 1924 to 1965, few Catholics were allowed into the United States.

Migrants are not new; people have always been on the move, crossing borders as they run from death or toward survival. The Hebrew children wandered out of the desert and announced to the people of Canaan that God had promised the Canaanites' land to the Hebrews. The Normans invaded Ireland and informed the Irish that King Henry II had given their homes to the Normans.

It's easy to understand fear of immigrants who enter a country as a



marching army, but for some reason even poor and powerless immigrants seem to terrify us. Even though almost all of us have an ancestor who came to America from somewhere else, we find it hard to identify with others in the same situation. Immigration is a difficult and emotional topic. Many struggle with the issue of who is “legal” and who isn't. Some believe that immigrants should stay in “their own” countries and fix “their own” problems.

Yes, there are many concerns and no simple solutions, but the Catholic Church teaches that our preferential

option, like Christ's, must be for the poor. Their welfare must come before other considerations, even our own. This is simply and plainly the gospel we profess. This must be our starting point.

Today is World Day of Migrants and Refugees, celebrated since 1914 on the last Sunday of September. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once preached a sermon on the parable sometimes referred to as “A Knock at Midnight” (Luke 11:5–13). He reminded us that there is bread in our house and that *we must* open the door to those who stand and knock. Will we let them in? Will we feed them? Or will we tell them we are already in our beds and cannot get up to look after their needs? +



*Loving and faithful God,
help us to learn the true joy
of living together as brothers
and sisters with all your children.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 26—
October 1

Monday, Weekday:
Jb 1:6–22 / Lk 9:46–50


Tuesday, St. Vincent de Paul:
Jb 3:1–3, 11–17, 20–23 / Lk 9:51–56

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jb 9:1–12, 14–16 / Lk 9:57–62

Thursday, Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael:
Dan 7:9–10, 13–14 or Rv 12:7–12a / Jn 1:47–51

Friday, St. Jerome:
Jb 38:1, 12–21; 40:3–5 / Lk 10:13–16

Saturday, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus:
Jb 42:1–3, 5–6, 12–17 / Lk 10:17–24

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