

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Introduction - September 19, 2021

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus again predict his passion, death, and Resurrection to his disciples. In predicting his passion, Jesus is acknowledging the danger they will face and is trying to prepare his disciples for it. The disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying and were afraid to ask what he meant. Having arrived at Capernaum, Jesus and his disciples enter a house. In this private place, Jesus asks his disciples about the argument they had while they were journeying. Again, the disciples are uncharacteristically silent and afraid to answer. Jesus then summons the Twelve. To this select group of disciples, Jesus teaches that those who would be first in God's kingdom must be servants of all. Jesus then calls forward a child and teaches the Twelve that to receive a child in Jesus' name is to receive both Jesus and the One who sent him.

We might easily fail to understand the significance of this action. In first-century Palestine, children were without status or power, possessing no legal rights. In this action, Jesus is teaching his disciples and us that when we serve the least ones among us, we serve Jesus himself.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

(see over)

The Holy Gospel for September 19, 2021

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

After leaving the mountain
Jesus and his disciples went on from there
and passed through Galilee.

He did not want anyone to know it;
for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,
“The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men,
and they will kill him,
and three days after being killed, he will rise again.”

But they did not understand what he was saying
and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum;
and when he was in the house Jesus asked them,
“What were you arguing about on the way?”
But they were silent,
for on the way they had argued with one another
who was the greatest.

Jesus sat down, called the twelve, and said to them,
“Whoever wants to be first
must be last of all and servant of all.”

Then he took a little child and put it among them,
and taking it in his arms, he said to them,
“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

(see over)

Family Activities

- ❖ Household chores are usually given to every member of the family.
Ask each family member what chores they were assigned to do this week. Recall a time when a disagreement about chores arose (or any disagreement). What was the disagreement about? Together imagine that Jesus entered the room just as the argument ended. Now reflect on that situation with the eyes of Jesus, who says that disciples must live with a servant heart. What does this mean? How would you look at the argument differently? Would you (re)act differently?
- ❖ Reflect on the culture of the day. Who are some people you think are great? Who are some people who are popular? Why? Jesus turns the concept of greatness upside down. He tells us that those who are great in the eyes of God are those who serve the least among us - not the strongest athlete, not the powerful politician, not the prettiest celebrity, not the richest businessman. How can we serve those more who need our help? Who are the people without power or status in our society that Jesus is calling us to serve? Do we do so willingly? Jesus teaches that God's judgment of us will be based on how well we served those in need with generosity and love.
- ❖ Again, it seems that the disciples are confused when Jesus tells them that he will be betrayed and killed and will rise again. Are there parts of the Paschal Mystery (Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension) that confuse you or that you don't understand fully? In the Paschal Mystery, we discover that our life has a pattern of dying and rising, and that God is with us. This fosters within us the hope that new beginnings will always be possible despite the endings that occur in our lives.
- ❖ Prayer of Generosity - St. Ignatius of Loyola
**Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labor without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.
Amen.**