



# Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time November 6, 2016

## First-world Problems

By Janel Esker

“**First-world problems**” is a phrase that’s come into common use. It describes what we, in a country of privilege, see as challenges that pale in comparison to the serious, life-threatening problems of people in other countries. First-world problems include computer crashes that destroy all your documents, a stylist coloring your hair two shades darker than usual, or having to send fries back because you ordered a salad. Yes, some are particularly challenging, but they aren’t on the scale of surviving war or trying to afford basic daily food.

The Sadducees in today’s Gospel are concerned with “First-life” problems. They’re using an earthly issue to challenge Jesus’ teaching on resurrection. Jesus doesn’t engage in their game-playing; he says earthly concerns like marriage aren’t the concerns of the “Second Life”—the life of resurrection. He doesn’t give details about this life, simply assuring them that God has promised it: “To God, all are alive.”

Though we might not test Jesus like the Sadducees tried to, we do have questions about resurrected life. What will it be like? Who will be there? How will it compare to life here on earth? We try to imagine life after death with our limited minds, but resurrected life is beyond our ability to comprehend while we’re in our First Life. We’re called to trust in our covenant relationship with God—a relationship that continues beyond death. Jesus reminds us, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

We do know one thing about resurrected life: We’ll be alive with God. And nothing can be better than that. †

*“God has promised all of us a Second Life.”*

## Sunday Readings

### 2 Maccabees 7:1–2, 9–14

“[They] marveled at the young man’s spirit, because he regarded his sufferings as nothing.”

### 2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5

“[The Lord] will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.”

### Luke 20:27–38

“He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

## A Word From Pope Francis

**Many times we feel horror** at the evil and suffering that surrounds us and we ask ourselves: “Why does God allow it?” It deeply wounds us to see suffering and death, especially that of the innocent! When we see children suffer, it wounds our hearts: it is the mystery of evil. And Jesus takes all of this evil, all of this suffering upon himself. This week it would benefit all of us to look at the crucifix, to kiss the wounds of Jesus, to kiss them on the crucifix.

—General audience,  
St. Peter’s Square,  
April 16, 2014



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What “First-world” problems distract you from God or the real suffering of others?
- What is one thing you can do this week to live the resurrected life now? What stifles it?



# 100-plus Years of Catholic Social Teaching

By Kenneth R. Overberg, SJ

**N**ew and renewed social, political, and economic events have rocked our world. Catholic social teaching remains constant. Its guidance remains relevant, real, and challenging.

For more than 100 years the statements of the popes, Vatican II, and conferences of bishops have addressed critical national and international issues. This article explores five major themes of social teaching in brief.

**Affirming human dignity.** At the heart of social teaching is an emphasis on the value of the human being. We are created in God's image, and our value is rooted fundamentally in who we are. In Jesus Christ, sin is overcome and each person's full dignity and destiny are revealed. Situations that undermine or limit human dignity cry out for change; those that truly promote it need to be fostered.

**Valuing work.** Concern for the worker was developed in detail in Pope St. John Paul II's *On Human Work (Laborem Exercens)* in 1981. To live out this value in our lives, we are called to look anew at our own work, be attentive to questions of justice in our workplace, and recognize both the values and limits of a society rooted in buying and selling.

**Developing the common good.** We must recognize the interdependence

among all people on earth. Basic necessities should be considered alongside the right to education, to take an active part in public affairs, and to worship God freely.

**Creating justice.** In its 1971 statement *Justice and the World*, the Synod of Catholic Bishops states that the gospel demands justice, right relationships, and the structural recognition of the human dignity for all people as an expression of Christian love.

**Building peace.** "Peace is not just the absence of war," St. Pope John Paul II wrote in 1982. "It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations." To build peace, we must actively stand against unnecessary violence. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, November 2012

God do this to me? My initial reaction was to blame God. I felt abandoned. But was God really to blame?

In a high-school course I taught called "Death and Dying," some students would say their family members blamed God for their suffering, a view that can destroy one's relationship with God.

Some believe that God sends disease to punish us. Jesus put this reasoning to an end when he was asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him" (John 9:2-3). Then Jesus healed his blindness.

I believe God walks with me on my journey. I am called to "take up my cross" and follow in Jesus' footsteps (Luke 9:23). Whatever our burden, we can choose to believe what is promised us in Romans 8:28: "We know all things work together for good for those who love God." †

Source: *Facing Cancer With God's Help*, © 2014 Liguori Publications

## Understanding God's Role in Our Suffering

By Jeanne Carol Martin

**I**n 1996, ten years since my previous surgery, my doctor called to tell me that I had a mass in my lungs and to schedule me for a biopsy. I cried, felt panic, fear, anger, why me?...not again! I considered myself a good person, a good wife, mother, sister, friend. Why would

## PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for the promise of eternal life. Help me to live as a child of the resurrection.

— From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

November 7-12

Mon. Weekday:  
Titus 1:1-9 / Luke 17:1-6

Tue. Weekday:  
Titus 2:1-8, 11-14 / Luke 17:7-10

Wed. Dedication of the Lateran Basilica:  
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 9-9, 12 /  
1 Corinthians 3:9C-11, 16-17 / John 2:13-22

Thu. St. Leo the Great:  
Philemon 7-20 / Luke 17:20-25

Fri. St. Martin of Tours:  
2 John 4-9 / Luke 17:26-37

Sat. St. Josaphat:  
3 John 5-8 / Luke 18:1-8

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