

## TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

October 21, 2018 B

**Facilitator:** *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the Word He wants us to hear this week.*

**Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.**

**Opening prayer:** *Loving God, you ask us to believe that in accepting the Cross, we will come closer to you. Help us to understand the mystery of the Cross through the example of Jesus. Speak your Word to our hearts as we reflect and pray together during this time. We ask this through Jesus who obediently took up his Cross for our redemption. Amen.*

**Response to last week's Word:** *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week. Did the Word impact your thinking and/or behavior? Did change occur and how was it?*

**Facilitator:** The first reading speaks of a mysterious suffering servant. In the Gospel, Jesus presents us with a *seventh lesson* on discipleship, namely, servant leadership. The second reading is a beautiful statement about the humanity of Christ, which should give us confidence when we approach him.

*Let us listen to God's Word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a Word, you may want to write it down to remember.*

Read the assigned Scripture readings, pausing briefly after each one. Consider going over the commentary after each reading if you have not done so prior to your meeting.

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 53:10-11

The opening words: “*The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity*” could leave us with a pretty cruel and nasty image of God. We need to remember that what pleased God was *not* the suffering of the servant but rather the servant's willingness to carry out his mission—even if it meant suffering and pain. God was pleased to use the servant's suffering and sacrifice to bring good to many people, just as God used the suffering and death of people like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., to bring justice and liberation to many people. Or just as God used the sacrifices of Mother Teresa to bring dignity to many who had lost their dignity. It was by meditating on passages like this that the early Christians came to understand why Jesus had to suffer in order to save us.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM 33

This psalm might well have been on the lips of the suffering servant or Jesus himself during his passion. It is a prayer of trust from one who has pondered deeply God's love and the promise to save God's faithful ones. The assertion that the Lord will “deliver their soul from death” takes on new meaning in the context of these readings, which speak so graphically

of the paschal mystery through which God offers deliverance.

### SECOND READING: Hebrews 4:14-16

This reading contains a double exhortation to hold fast to faith and to approach the throne of grace with confidence. Jesus' exalted state has not distanced him from us. On the contrary, he knows our limitations. As a man, he shared them with us. As an authentic human being, he carries with him all of the members of the human race and their needs to the heavenly throne of God. The second exhortation pertains to our relationship with Jesus and how that should give us great confidence to approach God's throne boldly.

### PROCLAMATION GOSPEL: Mark 10:35-45

*As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.*

**A participant reads the Gospel,  
then all pause to reflect.**

*As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to write down the Word you hear.*

**A participant reads the Gospel again,  
then all pause to reflect.**

**GOSPEL COMMENTARY: Mark 10:35-45**

*Let us now read the Gospel commentary privately.*

This Gospel is filled with misunderstandings, paradoxes and reversals. James and John seek places of prominence in Jesus' kingdom. They represent that part of us that desires to wield power and authority over others. Jesus offers a reversal of the common perception of power and authority: "Any one among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest." The Gospel shows how little the Apostles have come in their understanding of the nature of true discipleship. When they assert that they can drink from his cup and share in his baptism, they have no idea of the implications of their answer. The 'cup' and 'baptism' are references, of course, to Jesus' suffering on the Cross. For the disciple, this baptism will in time involve the same daily dying of humble and selfless service—the lesson of discipleship being taught in today's Gospel. In the Kingdom that Jesus is inaugurating, true greatness will involve a willingness to be humble servants of others.

**FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS**

1. Turn to the person next to you and share what verse in the Gospel caught your attention. Why?

**Share the next questions in small groups  
of 2 or 3 or with the whole group.**

2. Do you find it easy or hard to believe that Jesus "was tested in every way" that we are? How hard is it for you to believe that Jesus was *fully* human? What does this mean to you? What implications might a deep belief in the humanity of Christ have on our prayer life?

3. The world pushes us to climb the ladder of success and to be powerful. Christ tells us to be humble servants. The world tells us that "great" people are those with prominent positions. Jesus tells us that great people are those who humbly serve others. How do you reconcile these opposites in your heart?

4. What helps us to develop a humble servant-like spirit that Jesus speaks about, a spirit that is so obvious in the life of Pope Francis and was present in the life of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta?

5. What is the one thing Jesus is saying to us in this Sunday's Gospel about how a disciple should speak or act? And what do you need to do or change to be a better disciple?

**JOURNALING:** *Having listened to the Word of God, let us now take some quiet moments to write down what is coming to us. What are you hearing God say to you? Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. Go wherever the Spirit leads you.*

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

Consider sharing with one other person how you can act on or respond to the message of this Sunday's Gospel. Suggestions: Try to relate with a humble servant's heart to members of your family and community. Serve the needs of someone who is hurting. Pray for people crushed by infirmity or other forces in our world.

**SHARE PRAYER RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD**

Share a prayer, however brief, on the Gospel you have just heard, discussed and journaled about. For example: *Lord, I ask for things from you constantly, help me to ask rightly*—OR—*Dear Jesus, teach me to serve like you.* In other words, the prayer at this time should flow from the readings. (Consider standing in a circle and hold hands.)

**CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION  
AND INTERCESSION**

*Let us now share personal prayers of petition (prayers for self) and intercession (prayers for others).*

Pray for all in authority, that they will be servant leaders like Jesus.

**CONCLUDE WITH A SONG©**