

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time [a]

July 20, 2008

Readings

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

Romans 8:26-27

Matthew 13:24-43

Calendar

July 22: Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

July 24: US minimum wage rises to \$6.55 per hour.

Quotes

One may sin by greed and the desire for power, but one may also sin in these matters through fear, indecision, and cowardice!

John Paul II, On Social Concern, #47

The solidarity which binds all people together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.

John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, #157

Violence and injustice in the form of massive poverty, sexism, racism, and war destroy the lives of millions of human beings who die before their time. The radical transformation of crushing structures and murderous situations does not happen automatically but only through human effort that through active nonviolent resistance struggles for justice and against suffering. ... In addition to cosmic and social renewal, Spirit-Sophia's deeds take place when the life of every person is renewed. Jaded, discouraged, hurt, exhausted, worried, people have need for comfort, healing and new enthusiasm for life that arises every day. Nonviolently, but persistently the Spirit who dwells at the center of personal existence creates a clean heart, a new spirit, a heart of flesh and compassion instead of a stony heart (Ez 36:26).

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, She Who Is

Renewal is an ever-present need. ... Wherever the gift of healing and liberation in however partial a manner reaches the winterized or damaged earth, or peoples crushed by war and injustice or individual persons weary, harmed, sick or lost on life's journey, there the new creation in the Spirit is happening. ... Justice and peace throughout the world of nature and the human world are the effects of the Spirit's renewing power, coming to fruition whenever human beings find community in mutual relations of sympathy and love.

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, She Who Is

Thoughts for your consideration

Today's scriptures deal with the mystery of evil

- evil that shows up growing in the midst of all the good in our world
- evil that can choke the good things that we would like to see grow and prosper
- evil that can show up in the structures and institutions of our world
- evil that is reflected in economic injustice, racism and xenophobia, violence and terrorism, and a thousand other things
- evil that can tempt any of us toward violence and evil
- evil that can move us to be concerned about our group's good and not the common good.

Today's scripture, especially the parable of the weeds and the wheat, reminds us that God looks on this world with all its problems with compassion, love, and patience, not panic, hatred, and violence. God invites us to look on the world in the same way and act accordingly.

Class warfare is not the model of Jesus. Jesus models reconciliation and healing.

Meeting evil with evil is not the model of Jesus. Jesus speaks of active nonviolent resistance.

Destroying those who seem to be or do evil is not the model of Jesus. Jesus believes that change, growth, conversion and reform are all possible.

People in the wealthier half of the world, can be tempted to look on the other half with an attitude of judgment and even condemnation – much like the servants who want to rip out what they think are weeds right away. People in one culture can look at people in a different culture with the same critical and rash judgment. We can condemn and destroy or we can work together toward understanding, reconciliation and peace. We are invited to discover and learn and grow.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

What evil in the world especially upsets you?

What would you like to do to address it?

How is your response consistent with the values of Christ?

Actions - Links

Earthjustice is “a non-profit public interest law firm dedicated to protecting the magnificent places, natural resources, and wildlife of this earth, and to defending the right of all people to a healthy environment.” You can go to their web site and “take action on line” to advocate for actions to protect the environment. <http://www.earthjustice.org>

“**The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)** is the largest peace lobby in Washington, DC. Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL staff and volunteers work with a nationwide network of tens of thousands of people from many different races, religions, and cultures to advocate social and economic justice, peace, and good government. FCNL is nonpartisan.” You can go to their web site and “take action on line” to advocate for actions to promote peace. <http://www.fcnl.org>

For info about an effort to celebrate the **Feast of Mary Magdalene** (July 22) and to prayerfully encourage justice for women in the church, go to <http://www.futurechurch.org/new/marym.htm>

“Crazy Facts”

On July 24, the federal minimum wage will rise to \$6.55 per hour (from \$5.85).
Forty years ago, adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage was just under \$10 per hour.

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Spirit help us in our weakness

War continues in Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, and around the world. We pray.

Nations continue to spend fortunes on preparations for war. We pray.

Millions of people have awesome wealth. We pray.

Billions of people continue to live in poverty. We pray.

Millions of children do not go to school. We pray.

Greed and fear are behind so many decisions. We pray.

The desire for peace and justice is in so many human hearts. We pray.

Prayer – Meditation

Prayer for All of Humanity

I pray for all of humanity to one day feel the pulse of the Mother Earth in their feet as they tread. I pray for mankind to find the faith to believe in the messages carried by their dreams and to see beyond the visible world. I pray that everyone I come in contact with can walk away with much, or at least some, of the happiness that lives within me. I pray for peace, acceptance, and tolerance for all who express their love for the higher power (whatever that name may be). Most of all, I pray for an end to the violence and depravity that darkens many souls. Peace be with us all!

From Beliefnet Prayer Circle at http://www.beliefnet.com/prayeroftheday/prayer_main.asp