



Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time [a]

September 7, 2014

Readings

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

Calendar

September 8: Feast of the Nativity of Mary

September 8: International Literacy Day

September 11: Anniversary of the terrorism events of 2001

September 15: Start of National Hispanic Heritage Month

Quotes

Among the actions and attitudes opposed to God's will two are very typical: greed and the thirst for power. Not only individuals sin in that way; so do nations and world-blocs. That is why we spoke of "structures of sin," Hidden behind all kinds of so-called economic or political considerations, are real forms of idolatry: the worship of money, ideology, class, and technology.

John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 37, (Donder's translation)

Inequality is the root of social evil.

Pope Francis @Pontifex · Apr 28 2014

We can see that all that we have, and all that we are, is but a gift of an incredibly generous God who asks of us only that we respond to our brothers and sisters in the same gracious, generous spirit.

Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, 1 September 2002

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.

Pope John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 157

Let us learn from Christ how to pray, to forgive, to sow peace, and to be near those in need.

Pope Francis @Pontifex Feb 18, 2014

The unjust distribution of goods persists, creating a situation of social sin that cries out to Heaven and limits the possibilities of a fuller life for so many of our brothers and sisters.

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) in 2007

Thoughts for your consideration

If we think of the first and third readings only in terms of individual sinfulness, we may miss part of what God is telling us. In the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, we are called not only to look at and repent of our personal sin, but also look at the world and its structures and the need for reconciliation and repentance with respect to social sin. We are called to help one another to see our common sinfulness and to move into repentance and renewal.

The prophet in the first reading and the followers whom Jesus addresses, are called to help others to be aware of the sin of the world – a sin for which no one person is responsible. We all share responsibility. We are all invited to acknowledge our need for reconciliation as we face the realities of social sin -- racism in American society, extreme poverty in many parts of the world, increasing economic inequality in our nation and elsewhere, the exclusion and oppression of immigrants and refugees, structures that allow the violation of human rights, the deterioration of our environment, the repeated practice of war and terrorism, etc.

Catholic Social Teaching challenges us to move away from a privatized religion to a religion that is rooted in community and care for the common good. We are invited to see our sin as not just something between “God and me,” but also as something that involves the community – something that affects the community. Our repentance is reflected in our work to promote justice, to break down barriers, and to create reconciliation. Our repentance is rooted in our commitment to the common good of all.

The words of Jesus remind us of the need for creative dialogue and conversation between individuals and groups – not condemnation and judgment. This is the spirit that is needed as we work to bridge what divides us – north and south – black and white – rich and poor – Israeli and Palestinian – Iraqi and American – Christian and Muslim – Democrat and Republican -- worker and manager – women and men – powerful and powerless – liberal and conservative.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

When have you spoken up or challenged others about some ethical, moral, or social issue? What happened? How did it affect you? How did it affect them?

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When have you spoken up about some ethical, moral, or social issue in the public form? What happened? How did it affect you? How did it affect others?

Story

The prayer of a devotee to the Lord Vishnu:

“Lord, I ask you to pardon me for three major sins: first, I went on pilgrimage to your many shrines, oblivious of your presence everywhere; second, I so often cried to you for help, forgetting that you are more concerned than I am about my welfare; and finally, here I am asking for forgiveness when I know that our sins are forgiven before we commit them.”

From Anthony DeMello's Prayer of the Frog

Actions – Links

International Literacy Day is September 8. “For over 40 years now, UNESCO has been celebrating International Literacy Day by reminding the international community that literacy is a human right and the foundation of all learning.” Get info at:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/literacy-day/>

The anniversary of September 11

The anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 seems to be an annual remembrance for many even after 13 years. The 9/11 memorial museum in NYC has put together various lesson plans at <https://www.911memorial.org/lesson-plans> . Resources can also be found at September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows which “was born when a small group of family members of those killed on 9/11 became connected after reading each others’ pleas for nonviolent and reasoned responses to the terrorist attacks.” Go to: <http://peacefultomorrows.org/#>

“Crazy Facts”

11 facts about literacy in America from <https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-literacy-america>

1. 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare. Over 70% of America’s inmates cannot read above a 4th grade level.

2. 1 in 4 children in America grow up without learning how to read.

3. Kids who don't read proficiently by 4th grade are 4 times likelier to drop out of school. Start a badass book club to keep your peers reading. Sign up for Banned Books Club.

4. As of 2011, America was the only free-market OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) country where the current generation was less well educated than the previous.

5. Nearly 85% of the juveniles who face trial in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate, proving that there is a close relationship between illiteracy and crime. More than 60% of all inmates are functionally illiterate.

6. 53% of 4th graders admitted to reading recreationally “almost every day,” while only 20% of 8th graders could say the same.

7. 75% of Americans who receive food stamps perform at the lowest 2 levels of literacy, and 90% of high school dropouts are on welfare.

8. Teenage girls ages 16 to 19 who live at or below the poverty level and have below average literacy skills are 6 times more likely to have children out of wedlock than the girls their age who can read proficiently.

9. Reports show that low literacy directly costs the healthcare industry over \$70 million every year.

10. In 2013, Washington, D.C. was ranked the most literate American city for the third year in a row, with Seattle and Minneapolis close behind.

11. Long Beach, CA was ranked the country’s most illiterate city, followed by Mesa, AZ, and Aurora, CO.

Illiteracy worldwide from <http://www.literacypartners.org/literacy-in-america/literacy-facts>

“Worldwide, 775 million adults — approximately 12 percent of the world’s population — are considered functionally illiterate, with only basic or below-basic literacy levels in their native languages.”

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord, help us to love and respect one another.

For the poor in our nation and all the nations of the world, we pray....

For those who suffer from discrimination because of race, gender, ethnicity, or for any other reason, we pray.....

For those who cannot read and write and so are isolated from the richness of our world community, we pray.....

For all those who are trapped and afraid in places of war, violence, genocide, and terrorism, we pray....

For political prisoners and those denied basic human rights, we pray....

For those who are homeless, either in our own nation or as refugees who have no nation at all, we pray....

Prayer – Meditation

Prayer for Peace of Pope John Paul II

To you, Creator of nature and humanity, of truth and beauty, I pray:

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war.

Hear my voice, when I beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear my voice, and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice, and grant unto the world your everlasting peace.

Image



<http://www.literacypartners.org/literacy-in-america/literacy-facts>