



## Second Sunday of Ordinary Time [c]

January 20, 2013

### Readings

Isaiah 62:1-5

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

John 2:1-11

### Calendar

January 18 – 25: Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

[http://www.geii.org/week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_christian\\_unity/index.html](http://www.geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity/index.html)

January 21: Martin Luther King Day observed

January 21: Presidential Inauguration Ceremonies in Washington, D.C.

January 24-25: National Prayer Vigil for Life and related events in Washington, D.C.

### Quotes

Every form of discrimination against individuals and group - whether because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, or national or cultural origin - is a serious injustice which has severely weakened our social fabric. Racism is a sin; a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of races.

*~ U.S. Catholic Bishops, Brothers and Sisters to Us, 1979*

Unfortunately, we still encounter in the world a closed-minded attitude and even one of rejection, due to unjustified fears and concern for one's own interests alone. These forms of discrimination are incompatible with belonging to Christ and to the Church... The Church has a precise message: to work so that this world of ours, which is often described as a "global village," may truly be more united, more fraternal, more welcoming... Always put human beings and the respect for human rights at the center....

*~ Pope John Paul II, June 2, 2000*

I would therefore like to repeat that no one is a foreigner in the Church and everyone must feel at home! To make the Church "the home and the school of communion" is a concrete response to the expectations for justice in today's world.

*~ Pope John Paul II, General Audience of March 21, 2001*

“The fundamental sin is exploitation, whether it be expressed in the domination of male over female, white over black, rich over poor, strong over weak, armed military over unarmed civilians, human beings over nature. These analogously abusive patterns interlock because they reset on the same base: a structure where an elite insists on its superiority and claims the right to exercise dominative power over all others considered subordinate, for its own benefit.”

~ Elizabeth Johnson CS, *“She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse”*

Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Thoughts for your consideration

Isaiah says he will not be quiet until God’s glory is revealed – until those who are forsaken or desolate are welcomed back and become again “my delight” and “espoused.”

Paul says the glory of God can be found in the diversity of human gifts. Jesus reveals the glory of God at the wedding feast – when there is enough good wine for all to enjoy a great feast.

A person like Dr. King, whose holiday is tomorrow, Jan. 21, would not be quiet until the diversity of gifts in all human beings was respected and cherished.

We are in the midst of the week of Prayer for Christian Unity and pray that all our religious faiths will help us to honor everyone’s gifts as a united community.

In short, the word of God proclaims a vision of the great feast where “all are welcomed,” where the human rights of all men and women are respected, where all people have enough to eat and drink, where all can enjoy the richness of God’s creation, where all can find meaningful, rewarding work, where all enjoy civil and political rights, where refugees and immigrants are received with respect, where children are treated with dignity and care, where peace and reconciliation between nations is pursued by all sides, where terrorism and torture come to an end, where the whole human creation is protected and cared for, where all races are part of the feast, where the gifts of all men and women are appreciated, where “all are welcomed.”

## Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

Who are the people who are left out of your community? Why?

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*For a longer sharing here are a set of faith-sharing or experience-sharing questions:*

- When were you first aware of different races - of people different than yourself racially?
- When was the first time you remember perceiving the racial attitudes of your elders (parents, teachers, others)?
- When was the first time you remember getting to know or having a friend/acquaintance of a different race?
- When have you experienced discrimination against yourself because of your race?
- When have you witnessed someone else experiencing racial discrimination?
- When have you gotten upset about a racial issue?
- What have you learned from direct contact with people of different races?
- What racial stereotypes do you find present in the minds of people in your immediate world of neighborhood or school or work or family?

## Story

A Message from Mrs. Leonard by Mary Ann Bird

<http://go.webassistant.com/wa/upload/users/u1000057/workspaces/30stories/#message>

I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started to go to school, my classmates - who were constantly teasing - made it clear to me how I must look to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and hollow and somewhat garbled speech. I couldn't even blow up a balloon without holding my nose, and when I bent to drink from a fountain, the water spilled out of my nose.

When my schoolmates asked, "What happened to your lip?" I'd tell them that I'd fallen as a baby and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. By the age of seven I was convinced that no one outside my own family could ever love me. Or even like me.

And then I entered the second grade, and Mrs. Leonard's class. I never knew what her first name was - just Mrs. Leonard. She was round and pretty and fragrant, with chubby arms and shining brown hair and warm dark eyes that smiled even on the rare occasions when her mouth didn't. Everyone adored her. But no one came to love her more than I did. And for a special reason.

The time came for the annual "hearing tests" given at our school. I was barely able to hear anything out of one ear, and was not about to reveal yet another problem that would single me out as different. And so I cheated. I had learned to watch other children and raised my hand when they did during group testing. The "whisper test" however, required a different kind of deception: Each child would go to the door of the classroom,

turn sideways, close one ear with a finger, and the teacher would whisper something from her desk, which the child would repeat. Then the same thing was done for the other ear. I had discovered in kindergarten that nobody checked to see how tightly the untested ear was being covered, so I merely pretended to block mine.

As usual, I was last, but all through the testing I wondered what Mrs. Leonard might say to me. I knew from previous years that she whispered things like “The sky is blue” or “Do you have new shoes?”

My turn came up. I turned my bad ear to her plugging up the other solidly with my finger, then gently backed my finger out enough to be able to hear. I waited and then the words that God had surely put into her mouth, seven words that changed my life forever.

Mrs. Leonard, the pretty, fragrant teacher I adored, said softly, “I wish you were my little girl.”

## **Actions - Links**

### **The King Holiday**

Many cities and places in the US have ecumenical and interfaith services to remember Dr. King and his vision of and work for justice and peace in our nation and world. Participation in such events can help us renew our vision and commitment to social justice and us help with network with others who are seeking the same things.

- Info about Dr. King and efforts to keep his vision alive can be found at the web site of the King Center in Atlanta: <http://www.thekingcenter.org>.
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research Institute at Stanford University “provides an institutional home for a broad range of activities illuminating the Nobel Peace laureate’s life and the movements he inspired.” Their site is at: <http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu> . At the site you will find curriculum resources for teaching about Dr. King and even recordings of some of his speeches.

### **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

- Christians around the world celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity together from January 18 to 25, with the encouragement of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. We must work as one for peace and justice. For more info go to: [http://www.geii.org/week\\_of\\_prayer\\_for\\_christian\\_unity/index.html](http://www.geii.org/week_of_prayer_for_christian_unity/index.html) .

### **National Prayer Vigil for Life 2013**

- Info can be found at the web site of the Bishops’ Conference at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/>

[“Standing for the Unborn. A Statement of the Society of Jesus in the United States on Abortion” can be found at <http://www.jesuit.org/worldwide/social-justice/issues/social-outreach/pro-life/standing-for-unborn> ]

## Poverty USA

Poverty USA is an initiative of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. CCHD is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, working to break the cycle of poverty by helping people help themselves. Check out their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/povertyusa> or to [www.povertyusa.org](http://www.povertyusa.org).

## “Crazy Facts”

The Population of Poverty USA:

In 2010, 46.2 million people lived in Poverty USA, up from 43.6 million in 2009. That’s means the poverty rate for 2010 was 15.1%, up from 14.3% in 2009.

2010 marked the fourth consecutive annual increase in the number of people living in poverty. The poverty rate, or percentage of the overall population living in poverty, has steadily increased as well, up to 15.1% in 2010 from 12.5% in 2007.

The number of people living in poverty in 2010 (46.2 million) is the largest number seen in the 52 years for which poverty estimates have been published.

Source: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010, US Census Bureau and from <http://www.povertyusa.org/the-state-of-poverty/poverty-facts/>

## Prayers of Intercession

*Response: Loving God, hear our prayers for justice and peace.*

For a society without racism or any other form of discrimination, we pray....

For a world that learns to welcome and find a place for refugees and immigrants, we pray....

For governments that promote the civil and political human rights of all, we pray....

For a planet no longer divided by and suffering from war and terrorism, we pray....

For an end to the use of torture by all governments and other groups, we pray....

For a world where all people have enough to eat and drink, where all can enjoy the richness of God’s creation, we pray....

For a profound respect for our planet and its natural resources, we pray....

For a spirit of unity, mutual learning, and respect among all the faith communities of our world, we pray...

## Prayer

### For Unity of Faiths

O God, we are one with you. You have made us one with you. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, you dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you, and we love you with our whole being, because our being is your being, our spirit is rooted in your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world, and which makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

~ Thomas Merton, 1915-1968

