



Thirty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time [c]

Nov. 3, 2013

Readings

Wisdom 11:22-12:2

2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Luke 19:1-10

Calendar

November is Black Catholic History Month

Nov. 1: Feast of All Saints

Nov. 2: Feast of All Souls

Nov. 3: Daylight Savings Time ends in most places in the United States

Nov. 5: Election Day in many places in the United States

Quotes

“There is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of human persons, who stand above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable. They ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life: for example, food, clothing, housing... the right to education, and work...”

Second Vatican Council, “The Church in the Modern World,” No. 26

“Because God is the creator, redeemer, lover of the world, God’s own honor is at stake in human happiness. Wherever human beings are violated, diminished, or have their life drained away, God’s glory is dimmed and dishonored. Wherever human beings are quickened to fuller and richer life, God’s glory is enhanced. A community of justice and peace (thriving among human beings) and God’s glory increase in direct and not inverse proportion.”

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, “She Who Is”

“...we offer once again a simple image – a table. Who has a place at the table of life? Where is the place at the table for a million of our nation's children who are destroyed every year before they are born? How can we secure a place at the table for the hungry and those who lack health care in our own land and around the world? Where is the place at the table for those in our world who lack the freedom to practice their faith or stand up for what they believe? How do we ensure that families in our inner cities and rural communities, in barrios in Latin America and villages in Africa and Asia have a place at the table – enough to eat, decent work and wages, education for their children, adequate health care and housing, and most of all, hope for the future? We remember especially the people who are now missing at the table of life – those lost in the terror of September 11, in the service of our nation, and in the bloody conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa. A table is also a place where important decisions are made in our communities, nation, and world. How can the poorest people on Earth and those who are

vulnerable in our land, including immigrants and those who suffer discrimination, have a real place at the tables where policies and priorities are set?”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Faithful Citizenship”

“At this time of crisis it is important not to become closed in on oneself, but rather to be open and attentive towards others.”

Pope Francis, April 25, 2013

Thoughts for your consideration

Today’s reading from the Book of Wisdom reminds us that God’s “imperishable spirit is in all things.” Catholic Social Teaching affirms the dignity of every human person. “Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, regardless of race, gender, class, wealth, or other characteristics.”

In the gospel today, Jesus affirms the worth and goodness of God in a concrete human person, Zacchaeus of Jericho.

As a tax collector for the Roman oppressors, Zacchaeus makes lots of money but understandably seems to be respected or honored by no one in the town. Jesus does not ignore this man whom so many people dislike. Jesus does not start out by condemning his behavior. Jesus does not start out by exhorting him to change his behavior. Jesus simply begins by treating him as a human being – by acknowledging his existence and coming to his house for dinner. The next thing we know, Zacchaeus is changed. He returns money to those who have been cheated. He gives to the poor. Salvation comes to him and his household.

Salvation is not just a feeling. It involves a change in behavior and in how we relate to the world. This is what happened to Zacchaeus. His behavior is changed. His way of dealing with people is transformed. Social transformation begins.

Spirituality is not simply an interior thing. Spirituality involves our behavior and not just our personal behavior, but also our behavior as a society, as a community. Good spirituality leads to social transformations.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

When have you met a person who has changed your life in some way?
What happened? How did it change your life?

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How does our culture affirm the dignity of every human person?
How does our culture fail to affirm the dignity of every human person?
Share examples from your experience.

Story

King Pyrrhus of Epirus was approached by his friend Cyneas and asked, “If you conquer Rome, what will you do next, sir?”

Pyrrhus replied, “Sicily is next door and will be easy to take.”

“And what shall we do after Sicily is taken?”

“Then we will move over to Africa and sack Carthage.”

“And after Carthage, sir?”

“The turn of Greece will come.”

“And what, may I ask, will the fruit of all these conquests be?”

“Then,” said Pyrrhus, “we can sit down and enjoy ourselves.”

“Can we not,” said Cyneas, “enjoy ourselves now?”

<http://www.spiritual-short-stories.com/spiritual-short-story-366-King+Pyrrhus+of+Epirus.html>

Actions - Links

Immigration Imprisonment

The “bed mandate,” or immigrant imprisonment quota, forces U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to keep at least 34,000 immigrants in its detention centers every day. This policy is costly, encourages indiscriminate enforcement, and rips families apart. Tell President Obama to drop the immigrant imprisonment quota from his budgets.

http://act.presente.org/sign/quota/?source=presente_website

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Physicians for Social Responsibility is a non-profit advocacy organization that is the medical and public health voice for policies to stop nuclear war and proliferation and to slow, stop and reverse global warming and toxic degradation of the environment. Its website offers many opportunities for taking political action on justice and peace issues. See www.psr.org and check out the “take action” link.

“Crazy Facts”

According to the Congressional Research Service, net worth has become more concentrated in recent decades. The share of wealth held by the top 10 percent grew from 67.2 percent in 1989 to 74.5 percent in 2010. Declines occurred in the remaining 90 percent of households. The share of total net worth owned by households in the 50th to 90th percentile of the wealth distribution fell from 29.9 percent in 1989 to 24.3 percent in 2010, and the share of households in the bottom half fell from 3.0 percent to 1.1 percent.” <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33433.pdf>

“Taxes were far higher on top incomes in the three decades after World War II than they've been since. And the distribution of income was far more equal,” according to Robert Reich, former U.S.

Secretary of Labor. Yet the American economy grew faster in those years than it's grown since tax rates were slashed in 1981.” <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/economy/commentary/taxing-rich-good-economy>

Prayers of Intercession

Response: You have made all of us in your goodness.

May we rejoice in the goodness and gifts we have from God, we pray...

May we honor the goodness and gifts found in all other people, we pray...

May we respect all refugees and immigrants, we pray...

May we care with dignity for the elderly in community, we pray...

May we esteem all those who are dealing with disabilities and physical challenges, we pray...

May we create a world that respects rich and poor, we pray...

May we forgive those who have hurt us in any way, we pray....

May we bring to an end any more violence and war, we pray...

Prayer

Litany of Thanksgiving to those who affirm our universal human dignity

(source unknown)

The response to each part of the litany can be a simple “pray for us.” Or it could be “Grant us peace and justice.” or whatever response fits you and your community.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who worked with the poorest of the poor

Father Flanagan, who founded Boys Town

Francis of Assisi, who respected all creation and even kissed the leper

Dorothy Day, who spent her life living among the poor

Francis Xavier, who journeyed all over Asia to share the vision

Peter Claver, who met the slaves who came to America

Martin Luther King, who marched for the rights of all

Rosa Parks, who refused to sit in the back of the bus

Jean Vanier, who calls people into community

Those who feed the hungry

Those who shelter the homeless

Those who do the works of mercy

Those who speak out for justice

Those who take time with the elderly

Those who work with children

Those who journey with the disabled

Those who share the vulnerability

Those who listen to others in their need

Those who proclaim equality for all

Meditation

Recall the famous scene with the evil queen in the fairy tale Snow White. She would stand in front of her mirror and ask, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?” A prayer exercise that I would like to suggest is a playful parallel to those words. Daily, after you have finished with the practical use of your mirror, stand for a moment in silence. Then look directly into your mirror and with great devotion pronounce this short prayer:

Mirror, mirror on the wall,
may I look with love on all.

~ Edward M. Hays in *Holy Fools and Mad Hatters*

Image



<http://www.independentaustralia.net/2011/business/finance-2/income-disparity-widens-in-developed-nations/>