

Gracious is the Lord, and just;  
yes, our God is merciful!

Twenty-fourth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time



San Ignacio de Loyola Parish

September 13, 2015

## REFLECTION ON THE WORD

**S**elf-identification is a big deal in our society. Knowing who we are enables us to journey through life with confidence, a sense of direction and purpose, an accurate assessment of our capabilities as well as weaknesses. In today's Gospel, Jesus' question to his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" was not about his seeking his own self-awareness. It was a question put to the disciples that would reveal to them more deeply who



he was and why he came among them. In Peter's response, "You are the Christ," we meet a high point in Mark's Gospel response. We are invited to struggle more deeply with who Jesus is. We are invited to

prepare ourselves for what faithful discipleship entails. Alone, the demands of discipleship would be impossible, the struggle beyond us. But with God as our help, we can begin to think as God does, not as humans. But how does God think? Not in terms of beatings, buffets, pain, ridicule or even death. God thinks in terms of life and love. God thinks in terms of salvation. God only wills for us what is good for us and what brings us to new Life. We take up our own cross daily because this is the way to a share in risen Life.

**Words to reflect upon: How does God think? What faithful discipleship entails**

**TODAY IS NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY.** Let's reflect on the importance of this day with the words of **Pope Francis**:



*"Grandparents who have received the blessing of seeing the children of their children are entrusted with a great task: transmitting the experience of life, the history of a family, of a community, of a people, sharing, with simplicity, wisdom, and faith itself—the most precious inheritance."*

## LIVING YOUR PASCHAL MYSTERY

### The Suffering, Death And Resurrection Of Jesus And Our Participation In It

Today's gospel makes explicit the parameters of discipleship: self-denial, bearing hardship. It makes equally explicit why in the world anyone would follow Jesus: because this is the way to have Life. Herein is a clear gospel presentation of the paschal mystery: it means death and new Life, it means making a choice. It means that we, too, must embrace this way of living if we are to receive the gift of salvation Jesus offers.

**Words to reflect upon: why in the world would anyone follow Jesus?**

### Pope Francis:

"Our time has a great need for hope! The young can no longer be robbed of hope. ... The young need hope. It is necessary to offer concrete signs of hope to those who experience pain and suffering. Social organizations and associations, as well as individuals who strive towards acceptance and sharing, are generators of hope. Therefore, I exhort your Christian communities to be agents of solidarity, never to stop before those who, for mere personal interest, sow self-centeredness, violence and injustice. Oppose yourselves to the culture of death and be witnesses to the Gospel of life! May the light of God's Word and the support of the Holy Spirit help you to look with new and willing eyes upon the new forms of poverty that drive so many young people and families to desperation."



**Dear God, please bless my grandparents.**

**For the ways they helped me and made me strong, I give thanks.**

**For the ways they love me no matter what, I rejoice.**

**For the ways they have paved the road that leads me here, I am grateful.**

**Let them grow in wisdom and joy in life.**

**Bless them always until they come to rest in you.**

**Amen.**

Tomorrow, September 14th, is

### THE FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS,

a day to remember that the cross is more than a piece of jewelry or part of the décor of our homes and churches... more, much more. As we contemplate the body of Jesus crucified tomorrow, our faith and our love compel us to be more acutely aware of the body of Christ still being crucified today.



There are horrors being perpetrated in our world. More than 100,000 are dead in Syria, and the reign of terror continues. Many care, but nobody intervenes effectively. The 300+ girls kidnapped by ISIS in Nigeria have been returned to their families horribly traumatized in body, mind and soul. Again, no effective help has been found for them. Children in Brazil sleep under bridges and beg on the streets of the favelas; they get high so they can endure the daily torture of hunger, homelessness, sorrow and need. Tens of thousands of desperate refugees from North Africa continue to risk (and lose) their lives at sea seeking safety in Europe.

In the developing world, famine continues to decimate populations, and curable diseases claim many lives because people lack access to the vaccination they need. Even in opulent countries, there are many hungry and homeless.

If we who exalt the cross of Christ tomorrow do not tend to these who are his body, then our celebration is in vain and our prayers are hollow. In faith and with God's grace let us make our worship honest and true.

Patricia Sanchez, in *National Catholic Reporter*

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 1 Timothy 2:1*



### Let us pray together today for the chronically ill:

Sylvia Tasner, Jerry and Albert Vega, Fr. Vega, Rudy & Sonia Méndez, Maggie and Don Maziarz, Olga Pérez and Ritmo Aponte.



Syrian pen-seller in Beirut

### LET US PRAY! All Together, 24/7

**FOR** the success of the Bishops Synod on the Family in Rome in the fall,

**FOR** relief for the terrible sufferings of Christians throughout the Middle East,

**FOR** an end to the drought conditions causing so much suffering in Puerto Rico and

**FOR** the thousands of panicked North African refugees risking their lives daily on the Mediterranean in overcrowded unsafe boats.

## Listening to God's Messengers

In 1976, **Pedro Arrupe, S.J.** said "The heart of our identity and what ought to define our existence as followers of Jesus, is 'availability'." This means responding with freedom and indifference to the myriad ways in which God calls us in the messiness of our everyday lives. The challenge is to recognize that call...and the messengers that God sends to guide us.

*"Early and often did the Lord, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on this people...."*

Always remember, and don't forget, that *our God is a God of Surprises*. The messengers he sends us are also often surprises: the homeless person I walk by every day; the elderly neighbor or relative I often forget to visit; my teenage grandson who seems to speak another language unknown to me and refuses to cut his hair; the clerk in the laundry who almost never smiles. ..the list can be endless.

How available I am to God and God's messengers depends in large part on how often I stop and provide a silent space in which the Spirit can enter and I can listen.

**Pope Francis** sums up the goal of such listening:

"How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: 'Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person!' How beautiful!"

## Praying with Scripture



### Second Reading James 2:14-18

How deep is love if it is never expressed in actions? Pray on how you would go about changing from a "talk the talk" person to a "walk the walk" person.

## THE FOUNDATION OF GOD

My perfect Lord sang,

"Less likely is God to condemn my hand's action than condemn any soul."

How could that be possible, my heart thought?



And the Christ, knowing all minds, replied, "Forgiveness is the foundation of God's being."

*St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)*