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25th Sunday of Ordinary Time Between Earth and Heaven

Lessons and Discussions

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“...receives not me but the One who sent me”

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“But they remained silent”

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“they did not understand the saying”

Introit Entrance Antiphon – Daily Roman Missal

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Salus populi *Cf. Ps 37 (36): 38, 40, 28*

IV I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord; *
from whate-ver tribu-lations they cry out to me, I will
give heed to them; and I will be their Lord for e-ver.

Alternate options:

- Amazing Love
- Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
- O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts
- O Lord, I Am Not Worthy
- Once Again
- What Wondrous Love Is This
- Light of the World (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

“The End” Notes

- [1] Blessed John Paul II; August 26, 1998
- [2] Luke 9:58
- [3] Isaiah 53:7
- [4] Philippians 2:6-8
- [5] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1825
- [6] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy*
- [7] Genesis 28:12
- [8] Jean Galot, S.J.; *Angelic Witness: Uniting Heaven and Earth*
- [9] Matthew 6:10
- [10] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 2827
- [11] Wisdom 2:17-20
- [12] Matthew 27:43
- [13] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy*
- [14] Revelation 3:16
- [15] Catechism of the Catholic Church - Glossary
- [16] John 14:6
- [17] Matthew 5:48
- [18] Documents of Vatican II; Lumen Gentium - 41
- [19] 1 Peter 3:10-11
- [20] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 474
- [21] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy*
- [22] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 557
- [23] Pope Benedict XVI; Papal Visit to the US; April 20, 2008

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina – Simple Tone

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Mark 9:30-37 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me."

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 25th Sunday of OT

*From a sermon On Pastors by Saint Augustine, bishop
"On weak Christians"*

You have failed to strengthen the weak, says the Lord. He is speaking to wicked shepherds, false shepherds, shepherds who seek their own concerns and not those of Christ. They enjoy the bounty of mild and wool, but they take no care at all of the sheep, and they make no effort to heal those who are ill. I think there is a difference between one who is weak (that is, not strong) and one who is ill, although we often say that the weak are also suffering from illness. My brothers, when I try to make that distinction, perhaps I could do it better and with greater precision, or perhaps someone with more experience and insight could do so. But when it comes to the words of Scripture, I say

IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.
5.

S Alve, Re-gi-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ : Vi-ta, dulcé-do, et spes nostra,
salve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fi-li-i Hevæ Ad te suspi-rámus,
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde.
O clemens : O pi-a : O dulcis * Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.
R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

English Translation

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the

what I think so that in the meantime you will not be deprived of all profit. In the case of the weak sheep, it is to be feared that the temptation, when it comes, may break him. The sick person, however, is already ill by reason of some illicit desire or other, and this is keeping him from entering God's path and submitting to Christ's yoke. There are men who want to live a good life and have already decided to do so, but are not capable of bearing suffering even though they are ready to do good. Now it is a part of the Christians strength not only to do good works but also to endure the sufferings that threaten. Lovers of the world, however, who are kept from works by some evil desire, lie sick and listless, and it is this sickness that deprives them of any strength to accomplish good works.

Responsory – Office of Readings

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak;
- I became all things to all men, that I might save at least some.

I do all this for the sake of the Gospel, in order to share in its rewards.
- I became all things to all men, that I might save at least some.

Between Earth and Heaven – Lesson and Discussion

“...receives not me but the One who sent me”

Jesus says in the Gospel, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

Are we as mere humans able to receive God? Yes. “The history of salvation is God's gradual communication of himself to humanity, which reaches its summit in Jesus Christ. God the Father, in the Word made man, wishes to share his own life with everyone: in short, he wants to communicate himself. This divine self-communication takes place in the Holy Spirit, the bond of love between eternity and time, the Trinity and history. If God opens himself to man in his Spirit, man, on the other hand, is created as a subject capable of accepting the divine self-communication. Man — as the tradition of Christian thought maintains — is “capax Dei”: capable of knowing God and of receiving the gift he makes of himself. Indeed, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gn 1:26), he is able to live a personal relationship with him and to respond with loving obedience to the covenant relationship offered to him by his Creator.”[1]

selves to Christ, we unite our suffering to something larger than just what we think we are going through in our own little world. We must remember God can bring redemption out of suffering.

MOVIE – Intro into “Contact” – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:00

<http://youtu.be/PLQF-4uyD4Y>

This is the beginning scene from the movie “Contact”. It shows the vastness of the Universe and how small we are. It also shows how great and big our God is to create such an amazing universe. We can either try and avoid this greatness or try and unite ourselves with Christ who created everything and wants us to belong to Him above even this mighty universe.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Come, Creator Spirit

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator come, from your bright heavenly throne! Come, take possession of our souls, and make them all your own. You who are called the Paraclete, best gift of God above, the living spring, the living fire, sweet unction, and true love! You who are sevenfold in your grace, finger of God's right hand, His promise, teaching little ones to speak and understand! Our guide our minds with your blessed light, with love our hearts inflame, and with your strength which never decays confirm our mortal frame. Far from us drive our hellish foe true peace unto us bring, and through all perils guide us safe beneath your sacred wing. Through you may we the Father know, through you the Spirit of them both thrice-blessed three in one. All glory to the Father be, and to the risen Son; The same to you, O Paraclete, while endless ages run.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Father, the truth which gives meaning to human existence, and the source of that life which is eternal joy with all the saints in his heavenly Kingdom. Let us take the Lord at his word! Let us renew our faith in him and put all our hope in his promises!”[23] Christ was promising the He would suffer and die, but also that after His death he would rise again. The virtue of Hope is therefore connected to the promises of Christ. We must work hard to know and accept all of the promises of Christ, whether they are appealing or not.

ACTIVITY – Appealing or Not?

Using the four Gospels find as many scripture passages that contain the promises of Jesus. Are these promises appealing or not? Below are just a few examples.

What are some of Jesus’s promises that are appealing?

“I will make you fishers of men” – Matthew 4:19

“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of age.” – Matthew 28:20

“I shall raise him on the last day.” – John 6:40

What are some of Jesus’s promises that are not so appealing?

“If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” – John 15:20

“This very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” – Matthew 26:34

“And you yourself a sword will pierce...” – Luke 2:35

How do the apostles avoid the issue of Jesus passion and death? They begin to talk about themselves and who of them is the greatest. Our own pride, which is one of the seven deadly sins always will cause us to avoid Christ and focus on self.

How do we avoid the issue of suffering in our life? For many of us, when we look at our suffering we look only at our life. Satan does not want us to think of something that is bigger. He does not want us to think about the suffering of others, or especially the suffering of Christ. He would like for us to believe that we are the only one that suffers. Many times we believe that if we avoid the issue of suffering then it won’t happen. This is similar to avoiding a physical ailment, believing that it will simply go away. This is completely and utterly false. We are all going to suffer. How we are before, during, and after our suffering is what can make or break us. Christ shows us the way. If we unite our-

Our goal is to receive God. How do we accomplish this goal? To receive God, we must receive Jesus. How do we receive Jesus? To receive the least, the lowliest, in the name of Jesus, is to receive Christ Himself.

What does it mean to receive “in the name of Jesus”? This means to receive each person, even the lowliest child, as if they were Jesus Himself. This attitude was perfectly practiced by Saint Catherine of Siena. When the Saint was once asked by a priest how she was able to lovingly and patiently serve her family so well, she said that she pretended that her mom was the Blessed Virgin Mary, her father Saint Joseph, and her siblings the baby Jesus Himself.

Who in our life can we receive in the name of Christ?

How are children like Jesus? Children are an example of the evangelical councils: poverty, chastity, and obedience. They are poor, for they depend on others for everything. They are pure in both thought and deed. The innocence of a child must be protected. They are obedient, for they must rely on the wisdom of others to guide them. Our Lord said, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.”[2] Although Jesus is God, He humbled Himself, thus depending on others for simple necessities like shelter and food. Jesus was innocent and pure of heart, “like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth...”[3] Jesus was obedient, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death even death on a cross.”[4]

Give practical examples of how we can practice poverty, chastity, and obedience?

How is Jesus like a child? Many times we ignore children. If there is a dinner party we seat them at the children’s table, out of sight, out of mind. Many times it is the children that are the farthest away on our list of concerns. In our society the unborn children are the farthest away, so far cast from our mind, that many times they are not even considered children. Do we cast Jesus away?

TV SHOW – Family Guy – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:54

<http://youtu.be/cNkp4QF3we8>

In this clip, the mom tries to ignore her child, but couldn't with the child constantly try to get her attention.

How is Jesus ignored in our society? Many times Jesus is pushed away and He becomes the farthest on our list of concerns and the farthest thing from our mind. The Lord asks us to love even those farthest away, and in loving those farthest away, we love Him. "The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself. The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." [5] "The sure way of meeting Jesus, and through him the Father, is always that of humility and of loving service of the little, the humble, the poor, without recoiling when on this road we meet the cross, just as our Lord met it." [6]

Like a child, the humanity and simplicity of Jesus is evident. Mysteriously it is in the simplicity of His humanity that His divinity is revealed. It is under the simple appearance of Bread and Wine that Our Lord reveals in substance, His Body and Blood.

In this Gospel Jesus starts with a child and then ends with God. He points to the most simple on earth and ends with the sublime God in heaven. Jesus is the link between earth and heaven. The movie *For Greater Glory* begins with the poem:

*Between heaven and earth
Between light and dark
Between faith and sin
Lies only my heart
Lies God and only my heart*

It is Jesus Christ that who brings us from earth to heaven, darkness to light, and sin to faith. How does He do this? It is our heart that lies in the middle of these realities, and thus Christ desires to be in the middle to live and work within our heart and

the good, but will not push themselves to also avoid evil. Each group "remains silent" in acting as they ought, just as the disciples "remained silent" as the Truth Himself questioned them.

Appealing or Not? – Lesson and Discussion

"they did not understand the saying"

Did Jesus know everything that would happen to Him? Yes. "Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal." [20] Jesus is one person with two natures, human and divine; therefore His human knowledge is united with His eternal wisdom. The human knowledge of the disciples lacks this eternal wisdom and thus "they did not understand." In the midst of understanding that fails, Our Lord speaks the truth, thus revealing the mystery of our faith; His passion, death, resurrection.

"Our Lord never separates the announcement of his passion from that of his resurrection, which is the conclusion and illuminates its value. The disciples, on the other hand, thought only of the passion and, frightened, tried to escape it. The Evangelist notes that 'they were afraid to ask him' (verse 32) about the matter; they preferred to avoid the issue by ignoring it. It is really rather startling to see how they began to discuss instead, 'who (among them) was the greatest' (verse 34). This is characteristic of man on the natural level; to shun the cross and to seek instead a little glory for himself, and to assure himself of a place that is maybe a little higher than the next person's." [21]

How do we separate the passion from the resurrection? First, we do this when we only look at the negative without seeing the positive. Second, we may get overwhelmed at future events and thus only see a few things (usually the negative) but not the full picture. Jesus said to the disciples, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise." The disciples only heard the first part about being "handed over" and "they will kill him." In their fear the disciples stop and hear only half of what Our Lord is saying. They pay no attention to the second part which says, "after his death the Son of Man will rise." "Three times he had announced his Passion and Resurrection" [22] and three times the disciples hear only "passion" but not "resurrection".

We must be people of hope. We must take the Lord on His word, all of His word not just half. "Christ is the way that leads to the

These are the leaders, the shepherds, that instead of living their call to holiness, “they enjoy the bounty of mild and wool, but they take no care at all of the sheep, and they make no effort to heal those who are ill. This group perceive themselves to be holy and thus neglect their duties toward others, especially those in their care. The attitude is that I am fine, why do I have to worry about others.

Group Two – The Unmotivated

“In the case of the weak sheep, it is to be feared that the temptation, when it comes, may break him. The sick person, however, is already ill by reason of some illicit desire or other, and this is keeping him from entering God’s path and submitting to Christ’s yoke.” This group stays in its weakness never moving past it. When temptation comes they crumble. Their desire of God is not great enough, so they do not enter God’s path or submit to Christ’s yoke. This group is weak and lazy and thus stays in their sickness; they lack the hope necessary to believe that they can be well, that they can be holy. This group Saint John Vianny described well when he said they believe they are too sick to see a doctor or in other words to sinful to go to Church. This group falls into the falsehood that it is easier to remain sick, than to work toward healing or it is easier to remain overweight that to get fit and eat right. Short term to remain sick or overweight is easier, but in the long run both are not easy.

Group Three – The Motivated

“There are men who want to live a good life and have already decided to do so, but are not capable of bearing suffering even though they are ready to do good. Now it is a part of the Christians strength not only to do good works but also to endure the sufferings that threaten.” This group wants or desires the good and have decided to live it. They have the strength to do the good, but they do not have the strength to avoid evil. Saint Peter teaches what true life consists of. “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good, seek peace and follow after it.”[19]

What is common about all three groups? The common element in all three groups is that they do not push themselves out of their comfort zone. The first group is comfortable being leaders but do not push themselves to actually lead. The second group does not push themselves out of their sickness or lack of desire. The third group has only a partial desire, they want to do

it is within our heart that He accomplished the will of the Father. As Saint Augustine says in the Spiritual Reading, “Now it is a part of the Christians strength not only to do good works but also to endure the sufferings that threaten.” The Christian lives in the middle between earth and heaven, darkness and light, sin and faith. He must pursue the good of heaven, while avoiding the evil of the world.

In the Old Testament, Jacob had a dream of a ladder or staircase reaching from earth to heaven in which the angels ascended and descended. “Then he had a dream: a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God’s messengers were going up and down on it.”[7] Jesus is the ladder “rested on the ground” in His humanity while “reaching to the heavens” in His divinity. It is through Jesus that we climb to heaven. “In the Gospels, this manifestation is no longer seen veiled in a dream but is conveyed through the development of a human life. Jesus fulfills in himself what Jacob’s ladder had symbolized: the Son of Man stands on the earth as One whose head touches heaven. The angels going up and down enable us to understand the continuous exchange between heaven and earth that is fulfilled in the mystery of the Incarnation.”[8]

The mission of Jesus is to connect man with God, earth with heaven, the temporal with the eternal. It is the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, who continues to connect man with God. It is through the Church that we are able to live out the prayer, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”[9] “It would not be inconsistent with the truth to understand the words, ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,’ to mean: ‘in the Church as in our Lord Jesus Christ himself’; or ‘in the Bride who has been betrothed, just as in the Bridegroom who has accomplished the will of the Father.’”[10]

VIDEO – Amazing Bridges From Around The World – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:23

<http://youtu.be/yPOBgO5e0Ew>

Pontifex is Latin for “bridge-builder”. Pontifex is a name given to the bishops and *Pontifex Maximus* given to the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. This is why we still call the Pope, the supreme Pontif, Pontif coming from the word Pontifex. The bishops *in persona Christi* are the bridge builders between earth and heaven. The bishops and Pope as head of the Church continue to connect man with God and accomplish the will of God “on earth as it is in Heaven”.

Truth and Holiness – Lesson and Discussion*“But they remained silent”*

“Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him. For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With revilement and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, God will take care of him.”[11]

It would seem that the Pharisees would speak the words above or the enemies of Christ, like the unrepentant thief who mocking Jesus saying, “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”[12] These words however, were written 100 years before the birth of Christ and are a prophecy of our Suffering Savior as well as every Christian.

Why is it that people want to mock, torture, and test Jesus?

“The conduct of the just man serves as a constant reproach to the wicked who react by plotting against him, to belittle him, and to get rid of him. This has always been the case, from the earliest times to the present; and it was supremely so with our Lord Jesus Christ.”[13]

Have we ever been persecuted? How do we receive persecution for being good or holy? Why are we made fun of or even treated wrongly when we strive for holiness and doing good?

It is not that people dislike goodness or holiness, what people dislike is change. When we are good or holy it raises the bar or creates a standard. It reveals to others they could do better, they could be holier. When we are confronted with the truth it means we have to change our life. If we do not want to change our life, then we must get rid of that which convicts us, namely the truth. We have to remember we are either growing closer with God or we are falling away from Him. There is no middle ground where we can stay still. Jesus says that He spits out those who are lukewarm[14] (i.e. those who just stay stationary). Sloth is “a culpable lack of physical or spiritual effort; acedia or laziness.”[15] Change means a movement, and effort toward the good. The beatitude, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness”, is the opposite of sloth.

If we are already living a holy life, why do we still need to

progress? If we are still living in this world, it means we are not in perfect communion with God. Being in full communion with God can only be achieved when we die and go to Heaven. While we remain here on this earth we have every chance to strengthen our resolve and grow closer to our Lord. Also our life is not for our self. The Blessed Virgin Mary is immaculate and holy, being full of Grace, she was and still is a channel of grace for others. While we remain here on this earth we have every chance to be a channel of grace for others.

It was mentioned above that if we do not want to change our life, then we must get rid of that which convicts us, namely the truth. How do we try to get rid of the truth?

One way is through relativism. People say there is no absolute truth; truth is relative to each person or situation. This means that goodness or holiness depends on each person. In other words there is no standard for holiness. Jesus however says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”[16] The truth is not relative to each person, the truth is a person, the person of Jesus Christ. To get rid of truth implies that we have to get rid of the person of Jesus. Jesus sets the standard of holiness and gives us the challenge, “Be holy, as you heavenly Father is holy.”[17] This call to holiness is only possible because of the example and grace of Jesus Christ. Hope lies in embracing this call to holiness. Despair happens when we avoid holiness or believe the lie that holiness is not possible.

“The forms and tasks of life are many, but holiness is one - that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love.”[18]

What keeps us from holiness? One thing that keeps us from holiness is the idea that we are already holy, that we are “ok” where we are in life. This is the sin of presumption. The disciples “had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.” In the Spiritual Reading in this packet Saint Augustine points out three groups. All three believe they are “ok”, they believe they are great, but in fact they are lacking.

Group One – The Leader