

The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve
and to give his life as a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45



Detail, Anonymous, *Christ Washing the Apostles' Feet*, Paris, c. 1250-1260

TWENTY·NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

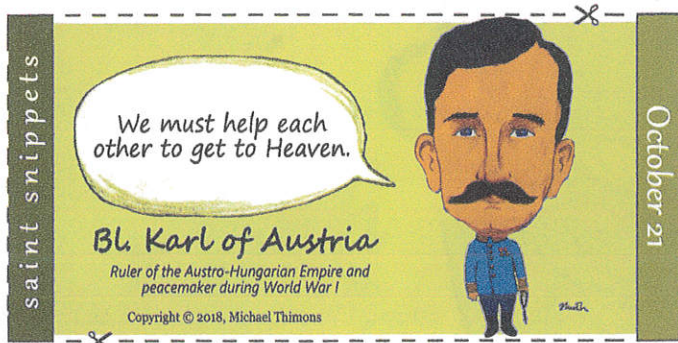
OCTOBER 17, 2021

Feast of Faith

Only Say the Word

The bread is broken, the banquet is prepared, and now we are invited to the feast. Once more the priest holds the host, now broken, for us to see, and invites us to behold the one “who takes away the sins of the world.” Truly blessed and happy are those invited to this meal, which is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, the supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:19). We respond to this invitation with a prayer to the Lord: we acknowledge that we are not worthy, but at the same time we are confident that the One who comes to us can heal us, body and soul. This prayer echoes the story of the centurion in Luke’s Gospel. The centurion, a Gentile, asks healing for his servant, but does not consider himself worthy to have Jesus come under his roof—he believes that Jesus can heal his servant with a word, without even seeing him. Jesus is amazed at his faith. It is the same for us. We believe that Jesus speaks to us, comes to us, dwells with us, even though we neither hear his voice nor see his face.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



The Humanity Of Jesus Christ

All three readings today support—each in its own way, of course—a reflection on the humanity of Jesus Christ and how that humanity played a key role in the drama of our salvation. Although not chosen specifically to coordinate with the other two readings, today’s second reading does in fact carry forward the theme of Christ’s humanity in a remarkable way. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews highlights the solidarity that exists between Jesus and us, precisely because in his human nature Jesus has known the same sufferings and testing that are our own experience. Because he can “sympathize with our weaknesses,” we can “approach the throne of grace to receive mercy.” For the author of Hebrews, the humanity of Jesus was an essential requirement for his redemptive death, as well as an invitation to us to find in Jesus someone with whom we can identify in our daily struggles.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	2 Tm 4:10-17b; Ps 145:10-13, 17-18; Lk 10:1-9
Tuesday:	Rom 5:12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21; Ps 40:7-10, 17; Lk 12:35-38
Wednesday:	Rom 6:12-18; Ps 124:1b-8; Lk 12:39-48
Thursday:	Rom 6:19-23; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 12:49-53
Friday:	Rom 7:18-25a; Ps 119:66, 68, 76-77, 93-94; Lk 12:54-59
Saturday:	Rom 8:1-11; Ps 24:1b-4ab, 5-6; Lk 13:1-9
Sunday:	Jer 31:7-9; Ps 126:1-6; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	St. Luke
Tuesday:	Ss. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, and Companions
Wednesday:	St. Paul of the Cross
Friday:	St. John Paul II
Saturday:	St. John of Capistrano; Blessed Virgin Mary



Today's Readings

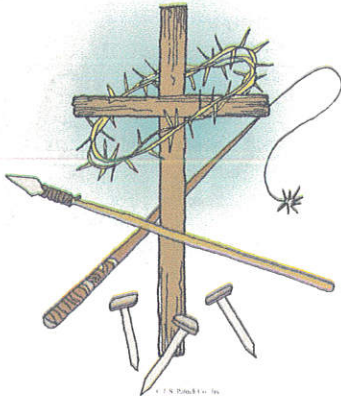
First Reading — My servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear (Isaiah 53:10-11).

Psalms — Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you (Psalm 33).

Second Reading — Let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Gospel — Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all (Mark 10:35-45 [42-45]).

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**Twenty-ninth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
October 17, 2021**

**Through his suffering,
my servant shall justify many.**

—Isaiah 53:11b

Treasures From Our Tradition

In the eyes of many, the papacy is a peculiar institution. Still bedecked with some of the regalia of medieval princes, contemporary popes have worked to define their role in ways that give them influence over the world both within and outside the Church. The trappings of royalty, never really a good fit for the successors of Peter, could render a pope distant and irrelevant. On the other hand, the tendency of many to think of the pope as if he were the CEO of a modern corporation is also inaccurate.

St. Gregory the Great, himself a pope, first called the pope “the servant of the servants of God.” He is “first among equals” among other bishops, who by tradition exercise significant authority within their own dioceses, not depending on the pope’s authority. This arrangement often puzzles those accustomed to a top-to-bottom “chain of command.” History has seen popes of many styles, but most strive to live up to Gregory’s definition. Perhaps today’s Gospel puts it all into the best perspective: “Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.” Pray for the pope this week.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Great Service

In Mark's gospel, he has a short description of the Last Supper, without the washing of the disciples' feet found in the gospel of John. Today's passage has a similar message. While James and John seem to be close friends of Jesus, they obviously have not learned what it means to follow him. But they think this is the time to ask for their share in the glory of Jesus' Kingdom.

Jesus doesn't make any promises of worldly glory, but he does promise a share in his suffering. When he goes on to remind them of how Gentiles rule over people, they probably thought he was going to let them do the same. Imagine their surprise when he told them that the greatest of them would be the ones who served the rest.

They still did not understand that Jesus had to suffer and die to complete his life mission. They probably did not know what Jesus meant about their being baptized in death as Jesus would. But then how many people today know that leadership is a form of service? Whether you are head of a family, or of a nation, you were given that authority by God. And God expects leaders to not only direct those under them, but inspire and encourage them to do better. Parents do more than correct their children: They also guide them, love them, protect them, and sometimes even let them learn from their mistakes.

This connection of leadership and service is all inclusive. A manager is called to help his employees do their jobs better, not by badgering, but by giving the support they need. Government leaders are called to serve all constituents, not just the ones who donate to their election fund. Military leaders must support their troops with respect as well as discipline. God calls Church leaders in a special way to service of their flock: to protect the weakest members, to give an example of Jesus' love to all, and to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in both clergy and laity. Anyone who lives a life of loving service can be "greatest" in the Kingdom of God.

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