

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Lord, Teach me to be gentle and patient with myself
and with those around me.**

Isaiah 50:4-9

This is the third among the four servant songs of Isaiah. The servant has begun his mission and is already suffering for his mission. The song reflects on the suffering inherent in doing God's will. However, because the servant belongs to God, he will not be abandoned but will instruct and support the servant and uphold his rights.

Later history shows that many prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel suffered for their ministry as they gave themselves to doing God's will. Many centuries after the song was written, Jesus suffered doing his Father's will and we have come to understand the redemptive power of suffering.

Verse 4, which is not part of today's excerpt, speaks of the instruction and the support that God gave his servant.... "The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them".

Reflect on developing a "well-trained tongue" and "well-disciplined" life.....

Remember the "weary" – many who are "weary" of hunger and thirst, of poverty and disease; of war and violence; of life and its many such struggles.....

Reflect on speaking words of affirmation, compassion, encouragement, kindness and support.....

Psalm 116

This is a Psalm of gratitude and praise. Our poet has experienced anguish, suffering to the point of death – perhaps, physical illness or may be a nervous breakdown. The "snares of death" and the "pangs of Sheol" took hold of him and he called on the Lord and the Lord answered. He is now immensely grateful for healing. So he begins: I love you Lord! He meditates: how can I thank the Lord for his abundant blessings! "I will witness to those around me that it is the Lord who saves" and "I will pay my vows to Him". There is nothing more to do than to say, "Thank you, Lord".

**I love the Lord because he has heard my voice in supplication,
Because he has inclined his ear to me the day I called.**

**The cords of death encompassed me.....
And I called upon the name of the Lord, O Lord save my life.**

James 2:14-18

James says that profession of faith without practice is empty, lifeless and meaningless. Faith without good works is not genuine. A living faith finds its expression in loving service, in good deeds, in works of kindness, compassion and charity. Good words must be translated into good works.

James says that Christians have a responsibility to care for one another and the care must go beyond greetings. Expressions of sympathies and compassion should be turned into food, clothes and shelter. This is outward expression of inner faith.

Let your faith come to life in loving and generous service to others in community.

Mark 8:27-35

After being on a long journey with the disciples and being with them through many exiting, challenging, and even painful experiences, Jesus raised questions about people's opinion about him and finally the most important question: "who do you say that I am?" Peter proclaimed Jesus as the "Christ", the Messiah they were waiting for.

Those of us who have known Jesus and walked with him for some time must still listen and keep responding to that question: Who Jesus is for us and how important he has become for us. We need to deepen our own vision of Jesus.....

Jesus teaches the disciples about the cost of following him – suffering, rejection, cross, death and resurrection. **Reflect on the cost of being a disciple. How much of yourself are you prepared to invest and what are you prepared to give?**

Peter came to the defense of Jesus. Jesus challenged Peter to get behind him and follow him and his way.....the way of suffering, sacrifice, total giving, even in death.....Peter was given a new vision, a new way of seeing and thinking and following....a way of seeing things God's way, not his way.....

Be docile..... Be discerning...Learn to see things God's way....

Saint of the Day, September 15 - Our Lady of Sorrows and 18 other saints are remembered this day.

Today the Church remembers Our Lady of Sorrows. Mary, the sorrowful mother, stood fearlessly at the cross while others fled. She stood strong seeing her son beaten, bruised, and placed under the burden of the cross. She was courageous and unafraid to stand by the cross as her son hung on the cross and welcomed her son's lifeless body into her arms. In all these, she saw the redemption of humanity and found peace.

The image of the sorrowful mother reflects the wisdom of Jesus as he proclaimed it in the beginning of his ministry: "Blessed are those who mourn: God will comfort them" (Mt. 5:4); Be Compassionate as your father is compassionate (Lk.6:36).

It is a good day to remember many mothers who have to carry heavy burdens.....make an effort to ease up someone's burden today!

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