

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.

"Do not be afraid..."



Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen?

Jesus is addressing his disciples in his hometown of Capernaum - a place of comfort and familiarity.

When does it happen?

Jesus has just gathered his twelve disciples and is now preparing them for a difficult mission.

Who is there?

Jesus and his twelve disciples.

What happens?

Jesus speaks words of encouragement, reassuring his disciples that the truth will always prevail and will come to light. Using the imagery of the sparrow and the hair on the head, he reassures them that nothing will ever happen to them without the Father knowing it – therefore they are safe and secure in his love, no matter what. Jesus challenges his disciples to remain true to his values (love, justice and peace), and, in doing so, they will experience the closeness of the Father. However, if they compromise these values they may well cut themselves off from the presence of the Father.

Suggested Guidelines to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

“Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows:”

Can you remember seeing such a ‘leader’ or, indeed, being such a ‘leader’ yourself: one full of enthusiasm for a just cause and yet, at the same time, realistic to acknowledge the challenges and obstacles ahead?

“What is now covered will be uncovered”

Can you remember an experience of some terrible injustice eventually being corrected and brought to light?

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”

Can you remember a situation where you had to take a strong stand on a matter of principle, which cost you greatly in terms of popularity, opportunity, even friendship? You held firm because you just knew that to compromise your integrity would have been the greatest loss of all.

“You are worth more than many sparrows”

Can you remember a time of great vulnerability in your life- anxiety, loss, failure or rejection – when the care and support of loved ones reminded you of your true worth and value, and this gave you the strength to keep going?

“Don’t be afraid... I know every hair...”

When have you been there for others in such moments of weakness and fragility - your presence and words reminding them of their dignity, beauty and value?

“So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men”

Can you remember an experience of struggling to stay true to your own cherished beliefs and values in the face of opposition and rejection? In your heart, you just knew the strength had come from God.

What does this Gospel remind me of? *Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?*

Now I can see that God’s loving presence and action were in that life experience.

Prayer Response - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...

Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence, e.g. "Do not be afraid".

An Invitation to Reflect

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

Action

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

Thought for the week

Parental love not only knows the suffering of their child but lives it with them.

Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.

Children



Jesus told His friends not to be afraid. He reminded them that God knows them, loves them and stays close to them wherever they go.

Can you think of a person—a sibling, a parent or a friend—who helps you be brave when you feel worried or scared?

Draw or write about this 'Jesus person' and how they helped you be brave when you felt scared.



Father, I thank You for the gift of this story which has helped me see the brave presence of Your Son in my life.

Action: this week I will try to show love by...

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