



This year's theme for the Season of Creation (September 1-October 4) is also our parish message for the month of September: A Home for All.

In the first two weeks we looked at the call of disciples to "radical" hospitality and "radical" servanthood; those acts of discipleship have another dimension: "radical" humility. We want people to experience our church "home" as an outpost of "radical" welcome – where they know they are a loved child of God. We want to extend that same care to our common "home" so that all can share in the gifts of our Creator.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
September 19, 2021

The Gospel of Mark

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."



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

• **READINGS:** Wisdom speaks of the rejection and mistreatment of God's servant. Like the enemies of Jesus, they plot to silence the virtuous One. Their hearts are so distorted they see no wrong in their behavior.

James tells us of the disharmony within the Christian community - when sinful inner cravings go unchecked. Heavenly and earthly wisdom are in stark contrast. Wisdom from above is peaceable and rich in compassion, producing a harvest of right relationships with others. In contrast, earthly wisdom is self-centered, e.g., when one doesn't get his/her way, he/she can become disruptive and divisive.

- “Where do the conflicts among you come from?” The root of all conflict lies in our passions. Wanting things our own way is another way to describe the “capital sins” ... so called because they are the source of all sins. Example: Being proud can lead to acts of injustice. Can you think of similar relationships Pride leads to ___? Envy is the root of ___? Anger, greed, lust, laziness and gluttony, etc?

- What does it look like if instead we embrace the passions of God? Surrendering my heart to grace leads to _____; gentleness _____ compassion _____, forgiveness _____.

- **GOSPEL:** Mark’s third lesson on discipleship: “radical” humility, to serve rather than be served. The Gospel opens with Jesus’ second prediction of his suffering and death. The apostles continued lack of understanding shows when they bicker about who among them will be most important in the new Kingdom. Jesus doesn’t challenge them directly, but teaches instead by standing a child in their midst. (In Aramaic, the same word is used for child and servant.) The purest service is that rendered to the most insignificant, symbolized by a child.

- You can almost overhear the apostles’ conversation – and you can almost certainly envision people reacted in similar way, deflecting the question rather than owning up to it. “What were you arguing about along the way?” But we can’t put one over on God. Jesus teaches in a unique way.

What does Jesus mean, what does it look like, or what could it look like if:

1. The last will be first.
2. The servant will be the leader.
3. The one who receives a child, receives the Lord.

- *Taking a child, he placed it in 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.”* How do you rate our Church in taking care and welcoming people we don’t even know? Our parish? Where do you rank yourself? Who do we need to put our arms around and invite home?

CHALLENGE OF WEEK

Invite friends, neighbors, family to our Parish Homecoming Weekend

- Mass followed by outdoor celebration – a time to check out small groups, learn about ministry, meet new people, meet our priests, connect over coffee and sweets and more!

SEASON OF CREATION WEEK 3

Jesus catches the Twelve arguing among themselves, competing to be recognized as the greatest in the group. Most all of us have to acknowledge a competitive streak in ourselves. Some people’s competitive juices flow when the issue is recognition. Some instinctively compete for power and control. Many people compete for wealth. Others compete to be most helpful.

Of note, Jesus does not tell the Twelve to stop competing. Jesus tells them that his disciples need to channel their competitive energies into service, service of the least. In the context of the Season of Creation, how can we best direct our competitive energies, both individually and as communities, to serve creation and the human community in this time of growing crisis and need? How do we channel those energies to respond to the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of the Earth. Do we see these as separate responses?

“A HOME FOR ALL” SEPTEMBER PRAYER, from SeasonofCreation.org

Heavenly Father, Creator of All: Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in our beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to answer your call to care for our common home.

Send your Holy Spirit to guide us to renew the face of your Earth.

Gladden our hearts as we work to create a joyful home for all.

We ask this in the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. AMEN