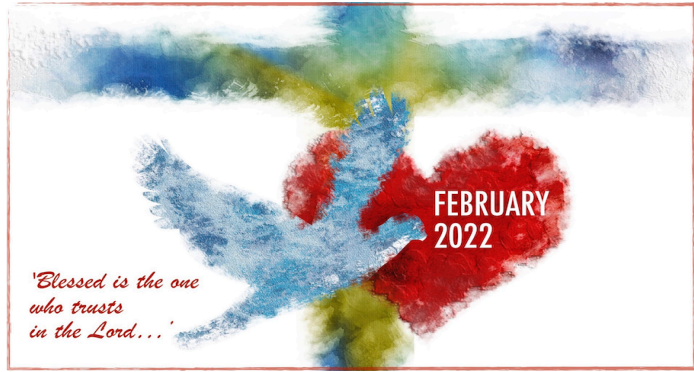


SMALL GROUP REFLECTIONS
SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 20, 2022

1 SM 26: 2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23
1 COR 15: 45-49; LK 6: 27-38

GOSPEL OF LUKE



Jesus said to his disciples: *“To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back.*

Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Highest, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

What does victory look like to God? We win when we love our enemies. In the first reading, we have a concrete example: God delivered Saul into David’s hand, yet David refused to take advantage of his enemy’s vulnerability. In the second reading, Paul says that just as humankind shares in the limitations of the first Adam, imitations that eventually lead to death, believers in Christ must trust that they will share in Christ’s victory over death.

In the Gospel, we continue to listen to Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain. Jesus challenges us not only to not retaliate against one’s enemies, but also to do them well: love them, do good to them, bless and pray for them. The real test of our Christianity is our ability to love those who dislike, despise, or hurt us. Such love is impossible without a full-hearted cooperation with the grace of God. Jesus doesn’t stop there – we must stop judging and condemning, and we are to give generously to others. In all of this, Jesus is our model. While on the cross, he forgave Pilate, the soldiers, the crowd who yelled, “Crucify him!”, and his disciples for abandoning him.

- Jesus tells us first to stop judging, then condemning and finally forgive. It is as if he is pointing out our sins so we can be more merciful. Do you judge and/or condemn?
- Why are some people able to forgive huge hurts (e.g., harm of a loved one) while many of us are unable or unwilling to forgive much lesser hurts? What are blocks and helps to forgiving life’s hurts? What are helps?
- Have you experienced this: *Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.?*

LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, LISTEN TO EACH OTHER

This week, we are coming together for the Parish Synod (see below).

- What fruits do you hope result from this time of shared conversation with Catholics, other Christians, people of all walks of life?
- How is small group like a weekly synod?
- How can we be better at listening? Whose voices need to be heard within our community?

Fr. Charlie and Bishop Noonan extend to you the invitation Pope Francis is sharing to journey together, listen and converse about our faith and our Church. It's called the Synod on Synodality – in simpler terms, praying to the Holy Spirit to guide us as we come together for small group listening sessions to talk about our Church's future, ministry, our community, our mission – Feb. 16-27 at the Parish. Come for fellowship, prayer, conversation, refreshment. **SIGN UP FOR THE PARISH SYNOD**, English and Spanish – and check out the Topics & Reflection questions and more. <https://www.stmarymagdalen.org/ParishInfo/synod/ParishSynod.htm>

JOURNEYING TOGETHER PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together
to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.*



Sources: Ascension Catholic, CatholicStewards.com