

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN SMALL GROUPS



Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday, September 27, 2020

Gospel [MT 21:28-32](#)

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "What is your opinion?
A man had two sons. He came to the first and said,
'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.'
He said in reply, 'I will not, ' but afterwards changed his mind and went.
The man came to the other son and gave the same order.
He said in reply, 'Yes, sir, 'but did not go.
Which of the two did his father's will?"
They answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you,
tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.
When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him;
but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that,
you did not later change your minds and believe him."

Reading 1 [EZ 18:25-28](#)

Reading 2 [PHIL 2:1-11](#)

Our pastoral year theme is "Created and Called to Love". Pope Francis calls us to care *for all of God's creation*. We were *created* to love, and we are *called* to love. We have *the capacity* to love, and *the obligation* to love. We have reflected upon forgiveness and generosity in the context of *Laudato Si'*. Our stewardship focus on love continues as Scripture takes us to consider love in action: the humility to serve others and the responsibility to care for others.

As a Parish, we are reflecting upon the rich teachings of "Laudato Si'" – pointing to chapters that bring the Gospel message home. This month: Chapter 2.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

The first reading and the Gospel are connected in that both speak of a 'yes' and a 'no' to God. Our 'yes' and 'no' to Him in words are one thing; our deeds are what matters.

Laudato Si, P-79

'Faith allows us to interpret the meaning and the mysterious beauty of what is unfolding. We are free to apply our intelligence towards things evolving positively, or towards adding new ills, new causes of suffering and real setbacks. This is what makes for the excitement and drama of human history, in which freedom, growth, salvation and love can blossom...'

Ezek 18: 25-28: Ezekiel wants the exiles to know that they will *not* be held responsible for the sins of the 'house of Israel', only for their own sins. Sinners who repent, and the virtuous who sin are making life and death choices. The reading is an affirmation of God's justice, and a call to repentance and responsibility.

Matt 21: 28-32: The Gospel offers the Parable of the Two Sons, who are asked to go to work in the vineyard by their father. The first son refused, but then repented. In humility, he chose to do the father's will. The second son initially expressed obedience, but did not act. The Parable was pointed at the religious leaders, who were good at talking a righteous walk, but too self-important to live it. Promises are empty when not followed by action. For those who act in true faith, salvation and love follow.

- **Last week, the generous landowner went back time and again to invite workers to the vineyard. This week, the father commands two sons to go work in the vineyard. What's your vineyard? What is the "work" you feel God is calling you to do? What are you responsible for stewarding?**
- **"Which of the two did the Father's will?" Do you identify with either? What keeps you humble?**
- **How often do you say 'yes' – or 'no' - to God and to people as you go through your day and week? What guides your answer in varying circumstances of everyday life?**

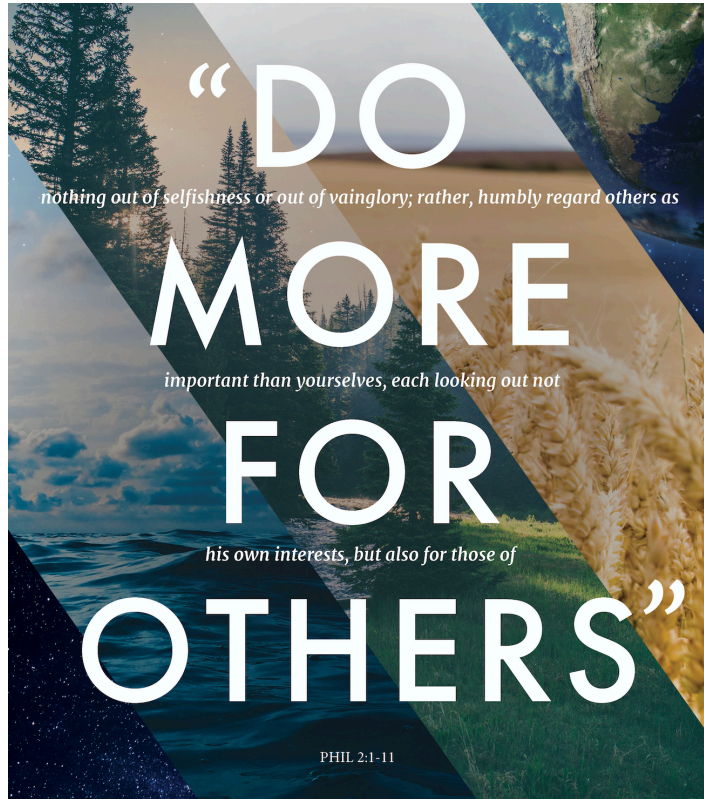
LIVING SCRIPTURE'S MESSAGE – Created and Called To Love

St. Paul writes: *"If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others."* [Phil 2:1-11]

Pope Francis writes: *"...Creation is of the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: "For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it" (Wis 11:24). Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection."* [LS-77]

Discuss how St. Paul and Pope Francis, each in their own way, write about the challenges and the rewards of love in action. Each in various ways ask us to be "united in heart, united in love, thinking one thing".

- **What is that one thing you would like to focus on in the week or month ahead to answer the call and take responsibility to love others as God intends?**
- **Who might you need to love better with your actions? How do you take the first step? Think of the love in action steps of the past month: forgiveness, generosity, humility.**



SERIES PRAYER: A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.