

June 3, 2018

**SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST
HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST**

GOSPEL [MARK 14: 12-16, 22-26](#)

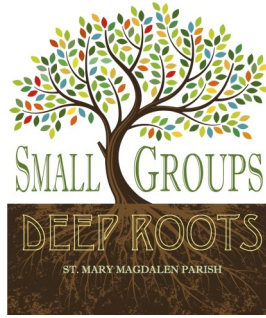
On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there."

The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



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Taken from Rice, Bob, *The Beginner's Gospel: a Walk through the Gospel of Mark*, 2002, pp 76-7.

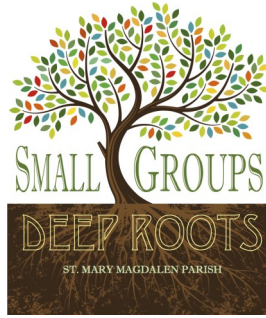
“What Jesus does in this Gospel passage is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. Remember how powerful the words of Jesus are. He would tell the demons to flee, and it would happen. He would tell a dead girl to get up, and it would happen. The voice that spoke, ‘Let there be light’ in the beginning of the Bible was Jesus. He speaks, and things happen by the power of His Word. Light is created. Demons are cast out. The dead are raised. And bread and wine become His body and blood.

Jesus still speaks today and in each person’s life. When have you heard Jesus’ voice in your life? How did you respond?

The Church calls the celebration of this the ‘Eucharist’, and that word comes from the phrase ‘to give thanks’, which is what Jesus did as He broke the bread and poured the wine. The Church doesn’t see the Eucharist as a symbol. It is the real presence of Jesus Christ: body, blood, soul and divinity. Does it still look like bread? Yes, just as Jesus still looked human even though we recognize Him as God. He transformed bread and wine into His body and blood. And He invited His followers to share it with Him.

Jesus invites us to follow him today. How have you followed him this week?

But we not only can worship Jesus in the Eucharist, but we also receive Him. What an incredible gift! It is our closest moment with God that we can get before we live eternally in His presence in heaven. What a gift! If someone gave you a gift right before they died, it would probably be a very special thing. The Eucharist is His gift to you, and the way He continues to always be with us and allows us to see, touch and even taste His love for us. Sound weird? The Gospel of John (6:48-66) tells that many left Jesus because they didn’t understand it. **The next time you are at Mass, think about what it is that you are invited to receive; realize the presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle. If you can, go there and spend time adoring Him.”**



June 10, 2018

TENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL MARK 3: 20-35

Jesus came home with his disciples. Again the crowd gathered, making it impossible for them even to eat. When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "By the prince of demons he drives out demons."

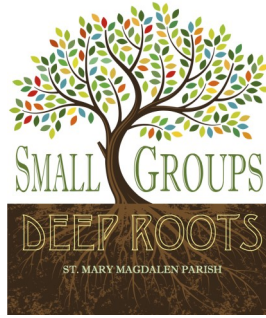
Summoning them, he began to speak to them in parables, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand; that is the end of him. But no one can enter a strong man's house to plunder his property unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder the house.

Amen, I say to you, all sins and all blasphemies that people utter will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin." For they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

His mother and his brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent word to him and called him. A crowd seated around him told him, "Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you."

But he said to them in reply, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."



June 10, 2018

TENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL MARK 3: 20-35

Taken from Rice, Bob, *The Beginner's Gospel: a Walk through the Gospel of Mark*, 2002, pp 24-5.

Do people think you are crazy for following Christ? Then you're in good company.

There were many who thought Jesus was "out of his mind". I've heard teens share all sorts of things after they commit their lives to Christ. People think they've lost it, or even say they've joined a cult. It's a hard thing to bear. But imagine how Jesus must have felt when He heard that members of His own family said he was crazy. These are the same people He played with as a child, were there at His Bar-mitzvah, and would eat with on holy feasts. They were childhood friends, people He went to school with. Simply put, there were people that were very close to Him.

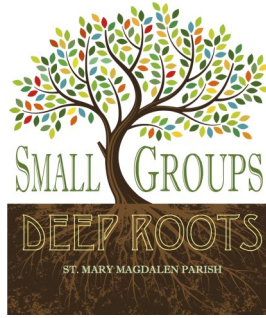
This experience of Jesus being perceived as crazy is inevitable living in a post Christian world. Share an experience where this has happened to you.

Are there times you have mocked others for trying to be holy?

Have you held yourself back from doing the right thing because you don't want to seem crazy?

Surrounded again by a mob of people (so many that He couldn't even eat), Jesus receives word that His family is there. We don't have a good grasp on the word "family" today. Unfortunately, there are even some who have experienced it to be a breeding ground of pain, dysfunction, and brokenness. But back then it meant an intimate connection, a life long relationship that nothing could break. And Jesus stunned the crowd when He talked about who His real family is. It is anybody who does the will of God. It's you.

What do you need to do to be counted among God's family?



June 17, 2018

ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL MARK 4: 26-34

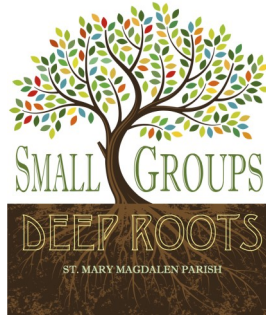
Jesus said to the crowds:

“This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come.”

He said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it?”

It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.



June 17, 2018

ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL MARK 4: 26-34

Taken from Rice, Bob, *The Beginner's Gospel: a Walk through the Gospel of Mark*, 2002, pp 30-31.

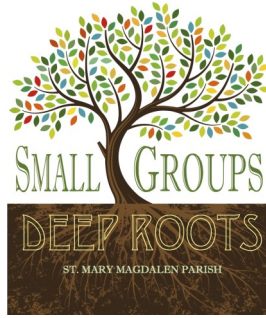
These parables not only explain how God's kingdom advances on earth, but also how it advances in our own hearts: 1.) We receive the Word because someone make its clear to us. It shines out to us like light in the darkness. 2.) We then make a decision. We say "yes" and become a deeper part of it. 3.) This faith begins to grow more and more in our lives. Though it was initiated by someone else (the "man" who scattered the seed), the real growth of it comes from God. 4. And what starts as a small simple thing grows to become the most dominant thing in our life.

How has this pattern worked in your life?

In the same way, these parables show us how to spread the Kingdom of God, too. We begin by shining the gospel message. Our Christian lives aren't supposed to be a secret or private thing, but something lived out for all to see. The boldness of this kind of life offers no middle ground. It becomes like a magnet to other magnets: it will attract some and repel others. **Do you ever do things to hide your "shine"?**

What little things can you do to share His gospel?

Here's a classic questions that gives another way of thinking: If being Catholic were a crime, would there be enough evidence in your life to convict you?



June 24, 2018

**SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
GOSPEL LUKE 1: 57-66, 80**

When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.

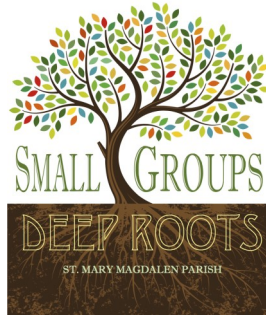
When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John."

But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name."

So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God.

Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.



June 24, 2018

**SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
GOSPEL LUKE 1: 57-66, 80**

(Excerpt from The Better Part by Fr. John Bartunk, pp. 532-33)

We take for granted John the Baptist's role in the story of Christ—we are so used to it. But isn't there something strange about it? Was it absolutely necessary to send a herald ahead of the Messiah? Couldn't the Messiah handle the job himself? Probably he could have, but his choice to send a forerunner reveals something essential about his personality.

Jesus never forces his way into our lives. He is too polite, too respectful. He refuses to conquer hearts by compulsion. He acts gently, gradually. He prepares us for the special graces he has in store for us. Since he is always thinking of us, he guides us little by little. The more generously we respond to the many messengers and signs he sends ahead of him, the more he will pick up the pace of his action in our lives.

What are dependable ways to identify God's will in our lives?

**Zechariah's song rejoices in the salvation God sends through the Messiah.
How should this healthy desire for salvation manifest itself in a Christian's
life in our day and age?**

**According to this passage, the Messiah will bring satisfaction to all the
longings of the human heart. Where does popular culture claim such
satisfaction can be found?**