



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

## The Word in Liturgy



"In the gospel is revealed the justice of God, which begins and ends with faith; as Scripture says, 'the just... shall live by faith.'" So writes Saint Paul at the outset of his great work on justification in his letter to the Romans (1:17). The scripture he quotes is from today's first reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4. In this very brief book, written in 597 B.C., the prophet Habakkuk questions God's direction of the world. Why do the wicked flourish, and the just suffer? The first verses of the reading are the beginning of a chapter describing the woeful state of human affairs that Habakkuk experiences, including but not limited to the evils of the Babylonian invasion. The word "violence" for Habakkuk signifies every form of greed and lawlessness that tramples on human rights. At the beginning of the next chapter, in response to the prophet's heartfelt question, God instructs him to write down the vision he receives and to trust that it will be fulfilled in its own time. God's answer does not actually answer the prophet's question. Yet it presses him to a difficult yet certain place of truth: He must trust. He must endure. He must have faith.

Today's Gospel is no less challenging. In each of the synoptics, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith. In Mark, it is in response to the call to prayer. In Matthew, it results from the disciples' disappointment at being unable to cast out demons. Here, in Luke, it follows upon several sayings concerning the demands of the moral life—specifically, the requirements of avoiding scandal and forgiving seventy times seven times. By using the

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image of the mustard seed, Jesus points out that it is not the quantity of one's faith that matters. His vigorous, Semitic expressions are not to be taken literally; the point is that even the smallest amount can enable one to do amazing, unimaginable deeds. The passage goes on to compare the disciples to servants or slaves, on whom their master has a legitimate claim. Should God be impressed if they avoid scandal, practice forgiveness, have faith? Even if they do all these things that are required of them, they have only done the minimum, the Gospel asserts.

# **Catholic Doctrine**

## ***The Sacrament of Holy Orders***

The Sacrament of Holy Orders consecrates one in Christ for service to the Church. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "Those among the faithful who have received Holy Orders are appointed to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God in the name of Christ." (LG 11) Based on the example of Jesus who chose men as apostles to follow him and gave them authority to preach and heal in his name, the sacrament of Holy Orders is only conferred upon men. Three degrees constitutes Holy Orders in the Church: the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate (bishops, priests and deacons).

By Baptism and Confirmation, all the faithful share in the common priesthood of all believers. The priesthood of all believers is not the same as the special consecration received in the sacrament of Holy Orders. All the faithful share in the mission and worship of the Church. But the Second Vatican Council, relying on the ancient tradition of the Church, teaches that there is an essential difference between the priesthood of all believers and the ordained priesthood. Historically, even our forebears in faith, the people of Israel, who were set apart from all the nations by God, had from among their members, a particular group, the tribe of Levi, which exercised a priesthood. The function of the Levites prefigured the ordained priesthood of the New Covenant (CCC 1541).

The fullness of Holy Orders received at episcopal consecration confers the threefold ministry of preaching and teaching, sanctifying and governing. Thus, the Catholic Church believes that bishops are constituted as true and authentic teachers of the faith. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. And they are to govern or lead by serving. The gospel images of Jesus which correspond to these ministries are teacher, priest and shepherd.

Bishops are entrusted with the care of a local Church (diocese) but they exercise their threefold ministry collegially, with all the other bishops and in union with the head of the



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college of bishops, the Pope (CCC 1560). Priests are co-workers associated with the bishop, who hands on to them in a subordinate way his own ministry, so that Christ's apostolic mission may be fulfilled (CCC 1562). Deacons assist bishops and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel, in presiding over funerals and in the various ministries of charity (CCC 1570).

Holy Orders configures one to Christ as teacher, priest and pastor. In the Latin Rite, all ordained ministers remain celibate for life, with the exception of permanent deacons. Celibacy is the sign that the ordained give themselves to God and the service of others (CCC 1579).

