



a Kendall Hunt Company

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Zechariah 9:9 - 10

Psalms 145:1 - 2, 8 - 9, 10 - 11, 13 - 14

Romans 8:9, 11 - 13

Matthew 11:25 - 30

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

Read the following **Word in Liturgy** and **Catholic Doctrine** sections. 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.

The Word In Liturgy



Today's reading from Zechariah is taken from the second part of the book (cc. 9 - 14), which was written sometime around the third century b.c. The author envisions the triumphant arrival of a messianic king, deliberately portrayed as meek and humble (riding on an ass) rather than as an aggressive warlord (astride a horse). The spiritual importance given to the anawim, the "little ones" whom Jesus said would inherit the Kingdom, is brought to the fore here. The "just savior" is one who will banish the weapons of war and proclaim a universal peace within his dominion. Matthew (21:5) will quote this passage as a prelude to his account of the Passion, and it is certainly in the background of the pericope chosen as today's gospel reading.

In the section of Matthew we read today, Jesus is presented as the embodiment of that Wisdom which the Jewish scriptures had referred to as a "reflection of eternal light" (cf. Wisdom 7:22ff.). Jesus' words would have been revolutionary to his hearers. Not only does he present himself as Wisdom incarnate, he suggests that the attainment of Wisdom is given as gift to the lowly ("merest children"), and that it is not the result of the labors of the learned and the clever (from whom it is "hidden"). Moreover, whereas Jewish tradition held that God's revelation is contained fully in the law and the prophets, Jesus says that "everything" has been given over to him by his Father. He, in turn, echoes the offer of Lady Wisdom in Ecclesiasticus 51:25 - 27 ("Come, take my yoke, and find for yourselves rest"), an offer made to Israel bent low under the burdensome demands of the Law, but now offered by Jesus to his

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disciples as something "easy" and "light" because of its origin in an ethic of love.

Catholic Doctrine Chastity

To understand why the Church upholds the virtue of chastity for all human beings in the expression of their sexuality, it is necessary to begin where St. Paul locates the discussion in today's second reading--the Spirit of God. The Loving One who has created us by the breath of the Spirit has also inscribed upon the human heart not only the capacity to love and share and reach out in communion but the vocation or calling to do so (CCC 2331). There is an integrity to the way in which God creates people, a connection between what we feel, who we are, and how we are built, that leads us to this vocation to love, to share, to reach out in communion. In other words, we are not just bodies and we are not reduced to blindly following sexual urges. Bodies, sexuality, sexual activity, spirit--all that we are--is subordinated to the ultimate end of humanity and creation itself, that is, to live in Christ.

Thus, the Church describes chastity as the integration of one's sexuality within the whole person, such that an inner unity of body, mind, spirit, and soul is attained (CCC 2337). This project of integration is seen by the Church as an apprenticeship in mastering one's self in human freedom. In other words, the human person learns to govern passions, desires, and drives, or that person is dominated and overwhelmed by those urges (CCC 2339) and acts without a true direction ordered toward the kingdom of God. This self-mastery is never really completed, but is, throughout every stage of life, sought and practiced (CCC 2342).

The Church's understanding of the virtue of chastity must be seen in the context of one's sexual identity or gender, for God created male and female, each with an equal dignity. When a man and a woman unite in marriage, the Church sees in their union and its procreative possibilities the fruitfulness and generosity of the divine Creator who has loved us into being.

Married couples, single individuals, those in religious life and clergy, all are called to the virtue of chastity. The way we give of ourselves to each other in friendship and love, building strong relationships, is not only enriching but necessary for our growth and maturity. Chastity flourishes and is wonderfully expressed in friendship (CCC 2347). Thus, human sexuality is a great gift and challenge whose drives the Church understands not as random factors in ourselves as persons and in our relationships but as ordered to the divine, to the kingdom and to God's plan.