

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechists Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings:

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalm 54:3-4, 5, 6-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

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

Alexandria was a major city and intellectual center of the ancient world, and home to a large, thriving Jewish community. The Book of Wisdom, composed in this context in the first century B.C., is important for its teaching on immortality, a concept that emerged late in Hebrew thought through dialogue with Hellenic culture. For the author of Wisdom, immortality creates an entirely distinct context for evaluating moral behavior. The wicked, because they believe everything ends at death, reject justice in favor of a life of immediate gratification. The just, however, with faith in a life after death, have a greater incentive to do justice in the present. Today's description of the just man, beset by persecutors who want to test his claims, echoes many passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms. This passage prepares us for the prediction of Christ's suffering that we are to hear in today's gospel.

Today's gospel contains the second of three predictions in Mark of Jesus' passion. As the Galilean ministry draws to a close and the journey to Jerusalem begins, the prediction of suffering deters the disciples from adopting a false Christology based on wonder working. The expression Jesus uses ("handed over") suggests both legal action (execution of a human sentence) and a Jewish theology of martyrdom (fulfillment of God's will according to scripture). The disciples, however—as is common in Mark—fail to understand Jesus' prediction. They are even reluctant to talk about it, lest questioning him reveal even worse news! The scene suggests a certain loneliness in Jesus on the journey to Jerusalem.

In the cultural milieu of Jesus' day, calculations of what honor was due to each person permeated social life. The topic of the disciples' discussion was, therefore, not a particularly vain or unusual one. It is the response of Jesus that is unusual. His insistence on service as



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the way of discipleship, and indeed as the only true form of greatness, is the outstanding message of this passage. The call to service is the doctrinal focus of today's catechesis.

Catholic Doctrine ***The Call to Service***

The Good News reveals that Jesus Christ came as one who serves, and that his disciples are called to follow in the work of humble service. We believe that his ultimate service was his free self-sacrifice by which he accomplished the work of salvation. He came not to be served but to serve others (Matthew 20:28).

By baptism believers are incorporated into Christ and given their vocation to a life of service. We share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly role of Jesus Christ, whose "royalty" consists in that the king of the universe made himself the servant of all. The Church envisions itself as carrying on this discipleship, following the model of Christ who comes to serve.

As servants, we worship God. The Church, gathered around the table of the Lord, while hierarchical, offers the same sacrifice of praise from all. Ordained ministers are to be servants. In fact, the Church understands that while the ordained are set apart, they are so designated precisely in order to serve all the faithful. As servants, Church members engage the world. The Church goes forth to practice corporal and spiritual works of mercy, preaches and strives for social justice among the nations, and assists the development of peoples. Each member serves in various ways, to the praise and glory of God, following the example of Christ.