



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings:

Numbers 11:25-29

Psalm 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which 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

Because Moses alone was not able to meet all the needs of the Israelite community, God decides that the charismatic gifts of Moses, including prophecy, should be shared with others. But Moses and Joshua, his trusted assistant, disagree on whether these gifts are legitimate in those who were not present when the gifts were originally bestowed. The generous view of Moses prevails. "Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets," he says. Why does Numbers preserve this minor episode? Later controversies no doubt made its lasting relevance evident, as the charism of prophecy was increasingly institutionalized in the community. A prophetic class developed, and the emergence of false prophets made it necessary to test and establish the credibility of true prophets. Nevertheless, this passage attests to the essential freedom of the God whose gifts can never be completely limited or subject to institutional control, and will emerge as God wills.

Today's gospel passage is a series of four sayings. The sayings contain quite diverse thematic material. The saying discussed above, concerning exorcists (1), is followed by the promise of a reward for those who help the disciples in the course of fulfilling their mission (2). Next we see that to cause another to sin, especially someone powerless and innocent, is especially abhorrent and earns divine retribution (3). Drowning was a Roman punishment, and would have been considered barbaric by a Jewish audience, thus emphasizing the severity of the crime. The final saying (4) treats the great depth of fear one should have toward even the possibility of being cut off from God by sin. Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation. Rather, he is using a vivid Semitic style of extreme contrasts to make his point: there is nothing worse than sin. Sin is at all costs to be avoided.



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The horror of the final component of the gospel passage echoes the severe condemnation of economic injustice found in the epistle reading. In the end times, a harsh judgment awaits those who defraud the poor. The passing nature of material goods reveals the ugliness of sins committed to obtain and hoard wealth.

Catholic Doctrine

Catholic Social Teaching

Concrete teachings arise from our Catholic vision of social justice and range over many issues. Human work, for example, results from God in whose image we are created and who bids us to finish the work of creation, collaborating with God to provide for human needs. Therefore, work is a duty and honors the gifts and talents bestowed upon us by our creator. Jesus himself worked as a carpenter. Catholics thus believe work potentially can be a means of sanctification and animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ.

We believe that access to employment and to professions must be available and open to everyone without discrimination. This includes both men and women, healthy and disabled, natives and immigrants. Society should assist individuals to find work and employment.

Any particular issue or problem of modern life that is addressed by Catholic social teaching returns to the fundamental notion that we are not created alone but together. Our Catholic vision of social justice insists that human beings are a community and that—with the help of God's grace—our social, economic, religious, family, and cultural spheres will more and more reflect that reality.