



a Kendall Hunt Company

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13

Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 7, 11

Galatians 2:16, 19-21

Luke 7:36-8:3 [or 7:36-50, short form]

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

Today's first reading comes from the court history of David. We read only the concluding section of a much longer narrative, a tale which is certainly one of the masterpieces of biblical literature. David has lusted after the wife of Uriah, one of his lieutenants, and impregnated her. To cover their wrongdoing he arranges the death of Uriah; but the prophet Nathan confronts the king with his sin, provoking David's moral outrage by the clever telling of a parable of covetous greed, and only then revealing that the parable was actually about the king's own sinful actions. Our reading describes the confrontation between the prophet and David at that point. Nathan reveals that David's deepest betrayal lies in the fact that Yahweh had chosen him as the anointed one, entrusted with the welfare of the people. In the face of David's admission of guilt ("I have sinned against the Lord"), Nathan pronounces the Lord's forgiveness and reduces his sentence ("you shall not die"). One might have expected Psalm 51 (traditionally considered to be David's prayer of repentance) to be today's psalm. However, Psalm 32 is equally appropriate, stressing as it does God's forgiveness of the one who confesses guilt.

Although today's text from Galatians is part of our semi-continuous reading from previous weeks, it fits nicely with the themes of divine mercy and forgiveness found in the other two readings today. In this section of the letter, Paul is developing the central thesis of his apostolic ministry; that salvation comes to us as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ, and not as a result of our observance of the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law. Furthermore, salvation has come to us because of the death of Jesus for our sins, a saving death to which we have been sacramentally joined ("I have been crucified with Christ") and which has mediated for us God's forgiving love. The experience of that forgiving love—what theologians call justification—is pure grace ("God's gracious gift"), and it cannot be earned by our human



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efforts as following the Law. It can only be accepted, and that act of acceptance—what theologians call faith—is required on our part in order for the subjective side of salvation to be accomplished (“I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God”).

Luke’s story of the woman forgiven by Jesus while at the table in the house of Simon the Pharisee is an eloquent expression of the core experience of Jesus’ ministry; He brings in his person God’s offer of unconditional forgiveness and, at table restores to sinners the integrity they had lost by their sin. The scene includes an action and a parable, with the latter explaining the former. Jesus shows that he forgives the woman’s sins by accepting her act of hospitality, even before he pronounces the words of his forgiveness. And, as his parable explains, her love, in turn, is great because she has been forgiven much. Luke’s story matches perfectly the Pauline doctrine of justification alluded to earlier; In the face of a divine offer of saving love, the woman is saved by her faith in Jesus (i.e., by her acceptance of his offer of love). It is the same experience of divine grace in the form of forgiving love that we ritualize.

Catholic Doctrine

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Church desires “that the baptized who have sinned should acknowledge their sins against God and their neighbor and have heartfelt repentance for them, and it tries to prepare them to celebrate the sacrament of penance.” (Rite of Penance, Decree, congregation for divine Worship, 2 December 1973) Sin harms our relationship with God, indeed mortal sin has deadly effects on that relationship. Sin not only offends against God, it damages our communion with the church. Thus, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation one’s relationship with God is renewed or restored and one is reconciled to the Church (CCC 1440).