



Bringing Home the Word

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 3, 2016

How Outward-Facing Is Our Faith?

By Janel Esker

On the reality TV show *The Amazing Race*, participants race around the world and compete in challenges to win a million dollars. At the start of each season, the host gives this “benediction” to the racers as they take off for their first destination: “The world is waiting for you. Good luck. Travel safe. Go!” The racers take off for the airport and their first destination.

The scene in today’s Gospel isn’t all that different. Disciples gather, Jesus gives final instructions, and off they go. With

little luggage, slower means of travel than we have today, and instructions to not greet anyone along the way, they may not have had as thrilling an adventure as *The Amazing Race* contestants, but there was probably enough drama for a first-century reality show called *The Great Commission*.

Of course, the disciples weren’t pursuing a million-dollar prize. Instead, they sought to cure the sick, bring healing, and spread the good news of Jesus.

That raises a question for us: How outward-directed is our faith? Some denominations place a particularly intense focus on the “Jesus-and-me” relationship—how Jesus has saved me, how he is my personal Savior.

Of course, a personal relationship with Jesus is extremely important. But unless that relationship leads us outwardly to serve God’s children, we’re not truly following Jesus’ example. Jesus is clear that discipleship requires trusting God and going out to bring hope and healing to others. What are we doing each day to bring God’s loving touch to those in need?

How amazing is our evangelization?†

“Our relationship with Jesus needs to lead to us to serve God’s children.”

A Word From Pope Francis

Behave according to the example you have in us: imitate these, the Christians who go forth in a life of faith, in a life of service, in the Church. But do not imitate the others!....Many live as enemies of the Cross of Christ....They glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things....At this point, each of us—even me!—should ask ourselves: Do I have any of this? Do I have any worldliness in me? Something pagan? Do I like to boast? Do I like money? Do I like pride, arrogance? Where are my roots, that is, where is my citizenship? In Heaven or on earth?

—Morning Meditation, “Two Coats of Paint,” November 7, 2014



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 66:10–14

“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.”

Galatians 6:14–18

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me.”

Luke 10:1–12, 17–20

“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; ...behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I respond to great, even dangerous, challenges?
- How can I support those in the midst of tragedy or crisis?

Catholic Calendar: St. Ephrem (June 9)

By Stephen P. White

Our nation was founded to be a refuge of freedom, a great experiment to see if self-limiting government in the service of liberty and the common good was possible. The success of that project is not now, nor ever has been, guaranteed to succeed.

This should be a sobering reminder to us of the importance of our task as citizens. “As Christians we firmly believe,” wrote Pope St. John Paul II, “that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism” (*Centesimus Annus*, 46). Our primary task as Catholic citizens is to ensure that the values of our nation accord with the truth about the human person, society, and the common good. If we fail, then who or what will guide our nation toward the truth that makes freedom worth living?

The vocation of all Catholic citizens is to enter into this task for the good of our families, our Church, our neighbors, and the nation. We cannot sit idly by. It is our sacred duty to educate ourselves and form our consciences (always with the Church!) so that in things large and small, we might judge rightly—at the ballot box, yes, but more importantly, in those innumerable, daily choices



that make up the lion’s share of our contribution to a free and just society.

As Catholics, we know that how we treat our neighbor matters not only for today or tomorrow but also for eternity. We know that the material goods we are given are not only for our own enjoyment but also are part of our vocation to care for those the Lord has entrusted to us. We know by faith that our responsibility does not end with the family, tribe, Church, or nation but extends to all human beings and all creation. We know that the ultimate good of political life is in service to a good far exceeding politics, that the kingdoms of this world will not last, and that the kingdom of God will never end.

By teaching that our lives are an unmerited gift, by teaching us to pour out our lives for others as Christ did, by teaching us to be holy as our Father in heaven is holy—and providing the grace

that makes this possible—our Catholic faith transforms the work of citizenship into a means for flooding the world with the good news of the Gospel and the hope that comes with knowing the saving love of God. If you want to be a good citizen, do everything you can to become a saint!

As John Paul II reminds us in his writings, we must never be afraid of the greatness to which we are called and for which we were created and redeemed: “Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. The kingdom of heaven is for those who are determined to enter it....Do not be afraid to be holy!....Full, true freedom is born from holiness” (message to youth at the European Youth Meeting, August 8, 1999). If we take these words to heart and let them transform our lives, then we can be assured of the freedom that comes only from living in the truth. †

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PRAYER

Lord, your love protects us
in times of trouble.
Strengthen my faith that I may be
a source of strength to others.

—From *Faithful Meditations
for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 4–9

Mon. Weekday: Hosea 2:16, 17b–18, 21–22 /
Matthew 9:18–26


Tue. Weekday: Hosea 8:4–7, 11–13 /
Matthew 9:32–38

Wed. Weekday: Hosea 10:1–3, 7–8, 12 /
Matthew 10:1–7

Thu. Weekday: Hosea 11:1–4, 8c–9 /
Matthew 10:7–15

Fri. Weekday: Hosea 14:2–10 /
Matthew 10:16–23

Sat. Weekday: Isaiah 6:1–8 /
Matthew 10:24–33

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