

Resources for your News

Sunday, 1 July 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 5:21-43

1. Like this woman, have you had the experience of a cure, an improvement, a success, after a long period of nothing happening? What was that like for you? What made the difference? On that occasion was there anything different in you, in others, in the circumstances – something that paved the way for the change or improvement?
2. 'Who touched me?' Jesus asked. It seems a strange request with crowds milling around. Many people brushed against him but the woman made contact in a different way. The same can happen in our relationships. We brush against many people but make real contact only with a few. Who are the people you have touched, and who has touched you? What difference has this made to you and to them?
3. Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has made you well'. What difference does it make to you that you have faith? In what ways does your faith make you well?
4. When Jairus asked Jesus to come and cure his daughter, some thought there was no point. Sometimes a situation can look like a lost cause. Has it ever happened to you that subsequent events showed there was hope where you thought there was none?

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MUSINGS

'The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts, rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them.'

Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 11



Sunday, 8 July 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 6:1-6

1. The story reminds us of how personal prejudices and agendas can block us from listening to the content of what another person has to say, no matter how relevant or wise it is. Perhaps you have experienced this. What difference has it made to you when you were able to focus on the content of what was being said and leave to one side your own prejudices about the speaker?
2. It has been said that there is nothing as useless as the right advice at the wrong time. We may want to reach out to another, but may be unable to make a useful contribution because at that moment the other person is not ready to be helped. Like Jesus we can 'do no deed of power'. As Jesus had to be patient and wait for another opportunity so do we. What have you learned about the importance of patience in working with other people?
3. The topic of religion can easily bring up prejudices, leading some to dismiss religion as superstition, old hat, or based on an outdated world view. Even among believers, prejudice can make it hard for individuals to listen to an alternative way of looking at things, to consider a different way of celebrating liturgy, or to live at peace with difference. Yet a closed mind can lead to a stagnant faith. When have you found that a willingness to consider a different perspective led to a deepening and strengthening of your faith?

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MUSINGS

'So let me ask you: Are there moments when you place yourself quietly in the Lord's presence, when you calmly spend time with him, when you bask in his gaze? Do you let his fire inflame your heart? Unless you let him warm you more and more with his love and tenderness, you will not catch fire. How will you then be able to set the hearts of others on fire by your words and witness?'

Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 151



Sunday, 15 July 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 6:7-13

1. Jesus gave the disciples a share in his mission by sending them out ahead of him. It was a gesture of trust and confidence on his part, even though they did not fully understand his mission. Have you ever been surprised by the trust shown in you by others to speak or act on their behalf?
2. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. Perhaps your experience gives you examples of the value of having another with you when engaged in an important task.
3. The apparently strange instructions given by Jesus were intended to counteract practices by bogus preachers who used preaching as a mask for money-making. The disciples of Jesus focus on the mission and not on their own comforts. Is it your experience that vested interests can impede a task, whereas having the right motives makes your mission more effective?
4. The task of the disciples was to call people to repent (*metanoia* meaning conversion, changing the way we look at God and at other people). Who have been the disciples, the people in your life who have called you to be more trusting in God? To whom have you given this call?

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MUSINGS

'I thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way. The Synod's reflections show us that there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems.'

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 57



Sunday, 22 July 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 6:30-34

1. The apostles reported to Jesus all that they had done and taught. Perhaps you have had the experience of being able to check in with somebody and share an experience. What was that like for you?
2. Jesus saw that the apostles needed to rest and eat. What has been your experience of finding a restful place after a busy day? What kind of nourishment have you found necessary in order to maintain energy and enthusiasm? What have these insights taught you about life?
3. When Jesus saw the crowd, he recognised their need and reached out to them. Who has been a Jesus person for you, someone who recognised your need and reached out to you? For whom have you been a Jesus person in that way?
4. It sometimes can be difficult to strike a balance between responding to the needs of others and meeting our need for rest and nourishment. What has helped you to keep the balance right?

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MUSINGS

'The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since 'their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament.'

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 72



Sunday, 29 July 2018

Sunday, 5 August 2018

**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

John 6:1-15

1. At the heart of this story we are told that Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed them. In our day this reminds us of the Eucharist, the bread of life, with which Jesus feeds us. Can you recall an experience of Eucharist that was especially significant for you? What was it that made it different? How did it influence your understanding of the Eucharist?
2. *Take, give thanks, distribute.* The actions of Jesus also suggest an attitude to time, gifts and living. We take what we are given, give thanks, and use what we have. Have you found that having a grateful heart for what you have been given has made it easier for you to share with others?
3. From what seemed meagre and inadequate resources many were fed. When have you found that when you gratefully use what little resources you have the results are beyond your expectations?
4. Jesus chose to involve those around him in feeding the people. Have there been times when you have experienced benefits from calling on those around you to use their gifts to help with a task?

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MUSINGS

'Hope is the leaven that, in those first years of engagement and marriage, makes it possible to look beyond arguments, conflicts and problems and to see things in a broader perspective. It harnesses our uncertainties and concerns so that growth can take place. Hope also bids us live fully in the present, giving our all to the life of the family, for the best way to prepare a solid future and to live well in the present.'

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 219



**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

John 6:24-35

1. Jesus distinguishes between food that gives quick satisfaction and food that gives lasting nourishment. It is a mark of wisdom to be able to say 'no' to enticing but delusory attractions in order to choose things of lasting value. From your life experience what advice would you give to another about where things of lasting value are to be found?
2. Jesus reminds his listeners that God is the source of all good things. What difference does it make in your life when you are aware that life, the world, everything you have is gift, and you live in a spirit of gratitude?
3. The work of God is that we 'believe in the one whom God has sent'. In what ways has your faith in Jesus enriched and changed your life? How has Jesus satisfied your hungers or quenched your thirsts?
4. As Jesus came down from heaven to give life to the world, so each one of us is here to be a source of life to others. Think of people who have been a source of life to you, and give thanks for them. For whom have you also been a source of life?

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MUSINGS

'I would like to ask you, dear families: Do you pray together from time to time as a family? Some of you do, I know. But so many people say to me: But how can we? ... But in the family how is this done? After all, prayer seems to be something personal, and besides there is never a good time, a moment of peace ... Yes, all that is true enough, but it is also a matter of humility, of realising that we need God ... all of us! We need his help, his strength, his blessing, his mercy, his forgiveness. And we need simplicity to pray as a family: simplicity is necessary! Praying the Our Father together, around the table, is not something extraordinary: it's easy. And praying the Rosary together, as a family, is very beautiful and a source of great strength! And also praying for one another! The husband for his wife, the wife for her husband, both together for their children, the children for their grandparents ... praying for each other. This is what it means to pray in the family and it is what makes the family strong: prayer.'

Pope Francis, *homily at Mass in St Peter's Square, 27 October 2013*



Sunday, 12 August 2018

**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

John 6:41-51

1. Faith is reasonable but we cannot reason our way into faith. We have to be 'drawn by the Father'. We have to be 'taught by God'. What opens your mind and heart to God's message?
2. When we label others disparagingly, we close our minds to what they are saying. The Jews did this to Jesus. Have you ever had the experience of being surprised by the wisdom of another when you laid aside your prejudices about them to listen to what they were saying?
3. 'No one has ever seen the Father except the one who is from God'. As Jesus put a human face on God and God's love, so God's love today is mediated to us through one another. How have other people been sacraments of God's love for you? For whom have you been that kind of a sacrament?
4. The way in which Jesus became a source of life for us was by giving himself. It is when we truly give ourselves that we can be life-giving to one another. If we do not give of ourselves, what do we have to offer? How have you discovered the importance of self-giving, in yourself or in others?

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MUSINGS

'Here too, we can ask: How do we keep our faith as a family? Do we keep it for ourselves, in our families, as a personal treasure like a bank account, or are we able to share it by our witness, by our acceptance of others, by our openness? We all know that families, especially young families, are often 'racing' from one place to another, with lots to do. But did you ever think that this 'racing' could also be the race of faith? Christian families are missionary families ... They are missionary in everyday life, in their doing everyday things, as they bring to everything the salt and the leaven of faith! Keeping the faith in families and bringing to everyday things the salt and the leaven of faith.'

Pope Francis, homily at Mass in St Peter's Square, 27 October 2013



Sunday, 19 August 2018

**SEEING YOUR LIFE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS**

John 6:51-58

1. Jesus tells us that to have life we need more than physical nourishment. How have you been aware of deeper hungers? What has met that deeper longing in you?
2. Jesus tells us that it is not just something he gives us which will give us life, but himself in his life, death and resurrection. How has your faith in the person of Jesus fed you?
3. Jesus speaks about 'drawing life' from him. In day to day living what are the practices which support your faith and help you to draw life from Jesus?
4. The Eucharist is one of the ways in which we draw life from Jesus. Recall with gratitude how the Eucharist has been a source of nourishment and life for you.
5. Perhaps you can also think of human examples of people drawing life from one another. From whom have you drawn life? Who has been able to draw life from you?

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MUSINGS

'I would like to ask you all a question today. But each of you keep it in your heart and take it home. You can regard it as a kind of 'homework'. Only you must answer. How are things when it comes to joy at home? Is there joy in your family?'

'Dear families, you know very well that the true joy which we experience in the family is not superficial; it does not come from material objects, from the fact that everything seems to be going well ... True joy comes from a profound harmony between persons, something which we all feel in our hearts and which makes us experience the beauty of togetherness, of mutual support along life's journey. But the basis of this feeling of deep joy is the presence of God, the presence of God in the family and his love, which is welcoming, merciful, and respectful towards all. And above all, a love which is patient: patience is a virtue of God and he teaches us how to cultivate it in family life, how to be patient, and lovingly so, with each other. To be patient among ourselves. A patient love. God alone knows how to create harmony from differences. But if God's love is lacking, the family loses its harmony, self-centredness prevails and joy fades. But the family which experiences the joy of faith communicates it naturally. That family is the salt of the earth and the light of the world, it is the leaven of society as a whole.'

'Dear families, always live in faith and simplicity, like the Holy Family of Nazareth! The joy and peace of the Lord be always with you!'

Pope Francis, homily at Mass in St Peter's Square, 27 October 2013



Sunday, 26 August 2018

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 6:60-69

- 1. In this chapter Jesus teaches that the meaning of his life, and the meaning of all human life, lies in being prepared to give of oneself. Perhaps you can identify with what Pope Francis says: 'Those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others' (Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, n.10).
2. 'This teaching is difficult', complained his hearers, including some of his own followers. Perhaps at times you also have wondered if you could go along with it. What helped you to overcome your resistance?
3. 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life.' In the midst of your doubts perhaps you have held on to belief because, like Peter, Jesus offered you a more hopeful message than you could find anywhere else. How has the gospel message been more attractive to you than any other?
4. 'The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.' Recall the words and phrases of Jesus that are words of life for you.

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MUSINGS

'Like Saint Patrick, I too have heard "the voice of the Irish" calling to me, and so I have come to you, to all of you in Ireland. As I stand at this moment, a pilgrim for Christ to the land from which so many pilgrims for Christ went out over Europe, the Americas, Australia, Africa, Asia, I am living a moment of intense emotion. As I stand here, in the company of so many hundreds of thousands of Irish men and women, I am thinking of how many times, across how many centuries, the Eucharist has been celebrated in this land. How many have found in it the spiritual strength to live, even through the times of greatest hardship and poverty, through days of persecutions and vexations...'

Saint John Paul II, Phoenix Park, Dublin, September 1979

As people from across the country and across the world gather in Dublin today with Pope Francis, we offer a prayer for the Holy Father and for all families: Bless us all with the joy of love. Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need. Protect all families with your loving care. Amen.



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