

PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (B)

17 -18 JULY 2021



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Jesus' pity is something we are told of only in the first three Gospels, not in the Fourth. It is a word which indicates a strong emotional response. The Hebrews believed that the seat of the nobler thoughts and emotions such as love, pity, anger, was the inner organs or viscera, such as the kidneys, bowels, heart, etc. Jesus is moved to pity by the abandonment of the people, by their hunger. He is moved also by the plight of individual people such as lepers or the sorrowing widow of Naim. The pity of Jesus is the incarnation of God's own pity. The pity of God is the overflow of His goodness. It is His desire to enrich His creatures. We might recall in this context that wonderful saying of St. Irenaeus: 'What is visible of the Father is Jesus; what is invisible in Jesus is the Father'.

Our Gospel passage today ends with the remark that Jesus began to teach His audience, the crowds. We find this reference to Jesus' teaching about six times in Mark's Gospel. The evangelist however does not give the reader the content of what Jesus taught. In this, the second evangelist is quite different from his fellow evangelists. Mark is the shortest of the Gospels. It consists of just sixteen chapters. It contains nothing like the five majestic teaching discourses of which are the glory of the Gospel of Matthew. What then is the content of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark? The content is Jesus Himself, Jesus in person. In this sense, Mark more than Luke or Matthew comes closest to John. The notion of Jesus as the Son of God permeates Mark's Gospel. The climax of his theme is the scene on Golgotha. Just before He dies, Jesus gives voice to an inarticulate shout. This has been interpreted as a shout of victory – victory over Satan, death, disease, and all the forces of evil. The shout then anticipates the Resurrection.

The centurion standing by and seeing how Jesus dies exclaims 'Truly, this man was the Son of God'. The centurion is the spokesperson for Mark's Roman Church. The idea of a crucified Christ was a scandal for the Jews, folly to Gentiles. For the Roman Church on the contrary, it was Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God. Jesus in His obedience thus manifest Himself as the Son of God. Such is the content of His teaching and this teaching reaches its climax on Calvary and in the faith of the centurion.

In our Eucharist today, we accept Jesus' teaching. With the centurion, we confess that 'this man is truly the Son of God'.

STEWARDSHIP: In today's Gospel, Jesus had planned to slip away from the crowds for a few moments of peace and a little rest. When He saw the people gathered, however, He put His needs aside to meet the needs of others. Sometimes, as good stewards, we are called to do the same.

READINGS SIXTEENTH SUNDAY

Jer. 23:1-6: The prophet Jeremiah meditates on the Lord's warning to the religious and civil leaders of Israel who are unfaithful shepherds. Babylon, the invader, is just an instrument in God's hands. Instead of protecting and gathering their sheep, the weak rulers are destroying them or scattering them.

Eph. 2:13-18: The 'gentiles' were once considered 'far off,' but they have been brought near by the blood of Christ. He draws all people to Himself and gives them the gifts of unity and peace.

Mk. 6:30-34: The apostles have returned from their first mission of preaching the Good News of the Kingdom. Jesus invites them to go with Him to a quiet place so that they may rest after their days of travel and work.

READINGS SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY

25 JULY '21

2 Kgs. 4:42-44: This text prefigures the story we will hear in the Gospel. Through the multiplication of the bread, we see the immense generosity and love of God. This great sign, though, only comes about because Elisha, a man of God, trusts in the goodness of God.

Eph. 4:1-6: Languishing in prison, Paul reminds his brothers and sisters that their communion of faith together is nourished by the presence of the Spirit of God which forms them into one body, united by one Lord, with one faith and one baptism.

Jn. 6:1-15: The link with the first reading is evident. It is the young lad who provides the raw material of five barley loaves and two fish so that Jesus can perform the sign that feeds the people as much as they wanted. The baskets with the remaining leftovers remind us that the Church will always be nourished by the Lord beyond its wants and needs.

PROPHET AMOS

The Book of the Prophet Amos is the third of twelve books in the collection of the Hebrew Scriptures called "the minor prophets." These prophets are not "minor" because their prophecies were insignificant but because they wrote less prophetic poetry and narrative than the major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, great prophets who produced reams

and volumes of prophetic oracles.

However, Amos earned the distinction of being the first “writer prophet,”—he compiled book containing the sermons he preached during the years that he was active as a prophet (c.775-50 BC). In effect, Amos set the standard for the biblical genre of prophecy. He preached and wrote in defense of the poor who suffered at the hands of the rich and the haughty. He challenged the ruling class to return to authentic worship of God and to abandon their empty rituals, to quit “going through the motions,” and worship with integrity the living God. Because Amos wasn’t a “professional prophet,” his adversaries didn’t take him seriously. Yet he persevered. His chief rival, Amaziah, a priest from the city of Bethel, Hebrew for “house of God” appealed to Amos surreptitiously to flee the city because the leaders wouldn’t accept his message, didn’t consider him to be a legitimate prophet.

In the time of Amos a prophet belonged to a royal court, or to a prophetic guild, or, like Samuel, came from a prophetic family.

Amos was different. He spoke on behalf of the Lord alone, didn’t attach himself to a union and therefore felt free to preach the truth because he wasn’t beholden to special interest groups, rich and powerful leaders, or established religious schools. Amos urged interior conversion and authentic worship rather than hollow ceremonies performed for the sake of getting the Lord’s attention. Throughout the pages of his book he continually defends the truth of who and what he was—a spokesman for the Lord. “I was not a prophet nor have I belonged to a company of prophets; I was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees. The Lord took me from following the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel’” (Am 7:14-15). To Amos, then, an ordinary man living a rustic life, the call from God was imperative: an offer he couldn’t refuse. “The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy?” (Am 3:8).

JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

The book of Jeremiah is one of the longest and most challenging books in the Bible. It is a mix of prophecy and history. Jeremiah was a prophet who ministered to the nation of Judah in its final years before the Babylonian conquest and the exile. God called him at a young age (1:5-7) to preach a hard message to the nation: the sins of Judah had reached their limit and God must execute his judgment by sending the people to exile.

Political complexities fill Jeremiah. Two major events frame the book: the religious reform of Josiah at the beginning (1:3) and the fall of Jerusalem at the end (39, 52). Near the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry, King Josiah initiates a return to worship of the Lord and the eradication of the worship of false gods. After he dies in battle against the Egyptians, Jehoahaz temporarily takes the throne, but is deposed by Pharaoh Neco who makes Jehoiakim king. Babylon conquers Judah in 605 BC under Jehoiakim's reign, but Jehoiakim tries to throw off their control a few years later. Jehoiakim is then succeeded by Jehoiachin, who is reigning when the Babylonians attack again in 597 in response to Jehoiakim's rebellion. Jehoiachin is exiled and Babylon places his uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne.

Zedekiah reigns for about 10 years until he too tries to reject Babylonian power, which elicits a crushing response from Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. In 587, the Babylonians come and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. They tear down the city and gouge out Zedekiah's eyes and take the leaders of Judah into exile. The conquest is complete and the exile has begun.

In the context of these political upheavals, Jeremiah advises the kings and prophesies to them, but Josiah was the only king to respond to him positively. Jeremiah advises submission to Babylon, yet the kings of Judah rebel and bring on the total punishment of the nation. Exile has always been the consequence for disobedience to the Law of Moses (Deut 28:49-68), but now disaster is imminent. Jeremiah announced that the time has come for the Lord to execute the terms of the covenant and send his people out of the land into exile. After the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah lives among the ruins, but he is later brought to Egypt against his will (Jer 43:5-7).

Jeremiah prophesies that the exile will last 70 years (25:11). Then the people will be brought back to the land, have a new Davidic king (33:15-17) and most significantly, a new covenant (31). The prophecy of the new king and covenant finds its fulfillment in Jesus, the son of David (see Matt 1:1; Luke 22:20).

Jeremiah had two scribes who were brothers of each other: Baruch and Seraiah, sons of Neriah. They are probably responsible for the text of the book as we have it. The book of Jeremiah is not chronological. It is collected from many things that Jeremiah said and did during his ministry. Parts of Jeremiah (39, 52) are parallel to 2 Kings 25. The book begins with Jeremiah's prophecies against Judah (1-25). Then it presents a prose history of Jeremiah's life and the events of the last years of the kingdom of Judah (25-46). Next are Jeremiah's oracles against the nations (47-51). Finally, there is an historical epilogue (52).

Jeremiah brings a message of judgment and a message of hope. The prophet announces God's judgment against Judah's sins, but promises a future restoration.

ORDINARY TIME

The term appears to be generic, but actually highlights its spiritual focus.

After Pentecost the Church resumes what is now called the season of "Ordinary Time." But what does that really mean? Is it some sort of generic season in the Church that has no focus? On the contrary, Ordinary Time has a specific focus even though the English name for it can be confusing. In Latin this period of time is called "Tempus Per Annum," more literally translated as "time during the year." The English translators chose to present it as "Ordinary Time," which has at its root the Latin word "ordo," or in English "order." In one sense this season takes its name from the ordinal numbers by which the Sundays are known (Second, Third, Fourth, etc. Sunday in Ordinary Time).

In a deeper sense, though, Ordinary Time can be seen as a "time of order" in the Church's year. What "order" does it have?

The USCB explains:

Christmas Time and Easter Time highlight the central mysteries of the Paschal Mystery, namely, the incarnation, death on the cross, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time, on the other hand, take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion. This is living the life of Christ. Ordinary Time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. The goal, toward which all of history is directed, is represented by the final Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Ordinary Time is a specific season in the Church that focuses on the life of Christ during his three years of public ministry. That is why the start of Ordinary Time begins with the Baptism of the Lord, as that is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time follows suit, focusing on the Wedding Feast at Cana, also known as Jesus' first public miracle.

The color for this liturgical season is green, which is most associated with growth. Ordinary Time is then viewed as a time of growing in our knowledge and love of Jesus. It is a time "ordered" to spiritual growth, walking in the footsteps of Jesus's public life. So while the season's name may appear to be an afterthought, it is not without meaning.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

While the pattern of prayer has changed considerably throughout the history of Christianity, Prayers of the Faithful remain a deeply important part of the spiritual connection believers have with Jesus Christ and our Lord in heaven.

The Prayers of the Faithful are some of the oldest prayers in the Catholic faith, forming a bedrock of Catholic liturgy that continues to support the faith of people worldwide. Sometimes described by other names – including general intercessions, or petitions, or even universal prayers – the Prayers of the Faithful are always part of the Liturgy of the Word shared with the faithful after the proclamation of the Gospel.

It can be easy for Catholics to think of the Prayers of the Faithful as a bit of a funnel, starting with prayers for those around our world that we may not know personally, groups of people that may be suffering real hardships, and individuals on the planet that we may never have an opportunity to know individually but that we still embrace and care about as Christians.

From there, our prayers get more and more specific as we include groups that are closer to us and our communities. These prayers go out to those that we care about deeply and personally, issues that we want to have resolved in our own lives, and issues that are challenging our fellow community members and parishioners.

At the conclusion of these intercessions, we are then asked to pray for the things we hold most dear to ourselves, silently and in our hearts, speaking directly to God and communing with Him only after we have prayed for everyone else.

It is in these moments that Catholics often feel closest to God, celebrating our faith and bringing our communities together in the power of prayer in such a way that allows good to flow from us and through us.

The Fundamentals of Prayers of the Faithful

While individual Prayers of the Faithful will always be unique and distinct by their very nature, particularly as you move through the prayers that begin more general and conclude very intimate and very personal, the Roman Missal does provide for some guidelines that should be followed as strictly as possible.

For starters, the Church intends that the Prayers of the Faithful begin addressing the needs of the Church.

This is not intended to be strictly for the specific church that parishioners are intending but the Church in general, allowing for the collective Prayers of the Faithful for all assembled worldwide to come together and ask God that he continue to shine his light on each and every Christian. Secondly, the Roman Missal intends for these prayers to include the salvation of the world and

all souls globally, Christian or otherwise.

These directives also asked that we specifically highlight figures of authority, servants of the public good, and those that are willing to risk life and limb to make sure that we are able to lead better, happier, healthier lives under the blanket of service that they willingly provide.

Thirdly, this form of prayer should focus on those among us that are dealing with difficulties, challenges, and burdens that they are facing.

It is the intention of these prayers to help those in our parish, to help those of the faith, and to assist those in our lives that are looking to lead happy, healthy, faith-filled lives but having a difficult time doing so for one reason or another.

Lastly, these intercessions and petitions should include prayers for our local community so that it may be filled with peace, serenity, and prosperity as He wills it.

These prayers are almost always offered by deacons of the church or a lector, though they may also be offered by a faithful member of the congregation or a cantor. Priests can also give the Prayers of the Faithful, something that happens most commonly during weekday Mass in Catholic churches around the world.

Those charged with delivering these petitions are asked to do so in a straightforward, dignified, and respectful way without a lot of expressions. These prayers are best delivered with a natural, upbeat, and reverent tone to the congregation.

SAINT OF THE WEEK MARY MAGDALENE 22 JULY

Look for the women in the Gospels, and you will not be disappointed. Search for one woman in particular, Mary Magdalene, and you will find yourself present at all the most important Gospel events: the passion, the crucifixion, the burial, and in a garden for the resurrection, just moments after a huge stone is rolled away from a tomb, allowing the Lord to step forth into a new world. St. Mary Magdalene is present at key moments, says key things, and is a key witness. She opens the door to Gospel scenes that would otherwise remain hidden from view. St. Mary Magdalene was among that troop of women who congregated on the outer edge of the twelve Apostles. These were probably women of means, who “provided for” Jesus and the Apostles “out of their resources” (Lk. 8:3). When these women are named, Mary Magdalene is always named first, similar to St. Peter’s position in the listing of the Apostles. Mary Magdalene is named many more times in the Gospels than most of the Apostles themselves, signaling her importance. The Gospel of Luke relates that seven demons were driven from her (Lk. 8:2). But there is debate over whether Mary Magdalene is also the sinful woman who anoints Christ’s feet and if she is also Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Building on the presumption that the sinful woman was Mary Magdalene, medieval traditions wrongly described her as a repentant prostitute. Artistic depictions almost universally show her as sultry, forlorn, and repentant. Despite the dubious connection between Mary Magdalene and prostitution, this association continues today and will likely take centuries to purify.

A “combined Mary” understanding rolls all three of the above Marys—the woman from whom demons were expelled, the repentant sinner, the sister of Lazarus—into the one person of Mary Magdalene. Mary was an extremely common Jewish name. It requires, then, careful attention to the text to sift which Mary is doing what in the New Testament. Magdala was a town on the Sea of Galilee. So when Mary from Magdala is referenced, the reader can trust that her town is adjoined to her name on purpose to distinguish her from other Marys.

An old Christian tradition justly refers to Mary Magdalene as the “Apostle to the Apostles.” The resurrected Christ appeared to her first, before all others. She is the proto-witness. Mary and other women go to the tomb of Jesus to anoint His body. They see the stone rolled away and enter. The body is not there. An angel tells them to not be afraid, “But go, tell his disciples and Peter” (Mk. 16:7 & Jn. 20:1-2)), so Mary dutifully fulfills his angelic orders. It is a woman, then, who tells the men, who spreads the news of all news to everyone else. The men come running and verify her account. The tomb is empty. As usual, Mary respectfully remains on the fringe of the Apostles. She weeps outside the tomb while Peter and John are inside. Time passes as they try to absorb what this all means until, finally, the “disciples returned to their homes” (Jn. 20:10). But Mary does not go home.

And then it happens. Mary is alone again, crying. She just can’t believe it. She has to take another look. So she bends her body in half to peer into the low empty tomb once again. When she straightens up, she notices a man standing just behind her. She thinks he is a gardener. A short, awkward conversation follows and then abruptly concludes: “Mary!” “Rabbi!” (Jn. 20:16). Her name is in the mouth of God! A name is enunciated and a new life begins! At Baptism. At Confirmation. At religious vows. May we all hear the voice of the risen Christ speak our name, directly to us, just as Mary Magdalene did, when we hopefully walk for the first time in the garden of paradise: “Ashley!” “Susan!” “Tom!” “Marty!” “Quinn!” “Juliette!”...and on and on and on until the end of time.

Medieval [accounts](#) suggest that after the Ascension of Christ, several of his closest companions fled persecution in the Holy Land and spent the rest of their earthly life in the South of France. Among them were Sts. Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, St. Maximinus of Aix and St. Mary Magdalene, the latter of whom is regarded as the patron saint of the region of Provence.

According to tradition, Mary Magdalene reached the coast by boat and landed in a city known today as Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. After evangelizing the whole area, in particular the city of Marseille (Massilia), she settled in a grotto nestled in the heart of a nearby mountain, which would become later the [Sanctuary of Sainte-Baume](#), where she dedicated the rest of her life to prayer. Her tomb, considered the “third vault of Christendom” (after the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and St. Peter’s tomb under the Basilica in Rome), is located in Saint-Maximin, at the foot of the Sainte-Baume mountains, and has been kept by the Dominicans for centuries.

PRAYERS

Prayer of St. Mary Magdalene

Saint Mary Magdalene,
woman of many sins, who by conversion
became the beloved of Jesus,
thank you for your witness
that Jesus forgives
through the miracle of love.
You, who already possess eternal happiness
in His glorious presence,
please intercede for me, so that some day
I may share in the same everlasting joy. Amen

Miracle Prayer to St. Mary Magdalene

*O Glorious St. Magdalene,
"model of penitents,"
obtain for me
the grace of perseverance
in the practices of self-denial
according to the Spirit
of my vows;
pray to God for me
that I may appear before Jesus
Our Lord and Master,
at the moment of my death,
with my lamp
filled with the oil of faith
and hope, and burning
with the pure flame of charity;
and thus merit to be received
with thee into
His eternal Kingdom.
Amen.*

**SCHEDULE SIXTEENTH WEEK ORDINARY TIME
SATURDAY 17 JULY - SUNDAY 25 JULY**

Saturday 17 Jul 15th Week Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. Mass Image & Mother of the Church II #26

9:15 a.m. Grave Side Service

10:30 a.m. Baptism

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass for Sixteenth Sunday

**Proper, Gloria, Creed, Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Don Reisch)**

Sunday 18 Jul Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Alice Kirk)**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Michael Curran)**

**11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Preface IV, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen Martyr)**

2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

Monday 19 Jul Day Off

6:00 p.m. Meeting

Tuesday 20 Jul 16th Week Ordinary Time St. Apollinaris Bishop & Martyr

8:30 a.m. Mass Cancelled due to funeral

10:00 a.m. Funeral

6:30 p.m. Meeting

**Wednesday 21 Jul 16th Week Ordinary Time St. Lawrence of Brindisi
Priest & Doctor of the Church**

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface Of Saints & Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints & Eucharistic Prayer III

Thursday 22 Jul 16th Week Ordinary Time Feast of St. Mary Magdalene

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface of Saints, Eucharistic Prayer III

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

**6:30 p.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface of Saints, Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Mary Allen Neary)**

Friday 23 Jul 16th Week Ordinary Time St. Brigid Religious

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints, & Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention:)**

4:00 P.M. Grave Side

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions

Saturday 24 Jul 16th Week Ordinary Time St. Sharbel Makhluf Priest

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper Holy Mary, Queen & Mother of Mercy #39, Preface
BVM, Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Myra Lee Seimetz)**

11:00 a.m. KoC Installation

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

**5:00 p.m. Mass Vigil of the Seventeenth Sunday
Proper, Gloria, Preface & Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Lucy Tabit)**

Sunday 25 Jul Seventeenth Sunday Ordinary Time

**7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer II
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen Martyr)**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer III
(Intention: Remigio Ramos)**

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer III

(Intention: Charlotte McCarthy)



The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." —Catechism of the Catholic Church

