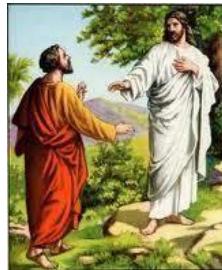


ctkAlive! Scripture Study

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020—A Cycle Readings



"Get behind me, Satan!"

Artist not identified

Source: [A Clay Pot](#)

Note: For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, you will find links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.

Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter's path. Instinct says, "Leave the reflection and chase after that link!" Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links. Exception: In the course of the lesson, you may have an opportunity to watch or listen to a relevant song or video.

Opening Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

(Note: As you pray this prayer, pause along the way to mentally and spiritually to "see" someone who fits the description of what I am praying for.)

May God bless you

(a Franciscan blessing)

Lord of Life, bless me with discomfort at easy answers,

half-truths and superficial relationships,

so that I may live deep within your heart.

Bless me with anger at injustice,

oppression, and exploitation of people,

so I may work for justice, freedom and peace.

Bless me with tears to shed for those

who suffer pain, rejection, starvation, and war,

that I may reach out my hand to comfort them

and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless me with enough foolishness to believe

that I can make a difference in this world,

so you can do through me what others claim cannot be done. Amen.

by Sr. Ruth Fox

Introduction to the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

This weekend's Scriptures echo the raw emotions of many who believe in the Universal, Risen Christ. Western states are burning. People far away see smokey skies and experience allergies and respiratory problems. Southern states are fleeing or recovering from hurricanes and other weather-related phenomena. Farmers see crops rotting or destroyed in their fields. Here at CTK, we cannot enter our sanctuary, but must attend outdoor Masses or view them at home. This past weekend, Fr. Paulson even had to abandon outdoor Masses due to fowl air in the atmosphere. With the prophet Jeremiah, we may be tempted to cry out, "Yahweh, you have seduced me, and I let myself be seduced." Let's take a deeper look at the readings and gain what inspiration and solace we can from the sacred word.

Jeremiah 20: 7-9

With a poetic confession, Jeremiah, Yahweh's "Bearer of the Truth," cries out to his God, not from a place of light but from an unexpected darkness within his soul. The people of God ignore his mission, reject his prophecies. Worse, they laugh at and insult him to his face.

Most 21st century Christians need reminding that Jeremiah lived 400 years after King David and 600 years before the birth of Jesus. God's chosen people had not yet come to a clear awareness of life continuing beyond the grave. What they saw was what they got! Knowing this helps us understand why Jeremiah expects God to help him in real-time to fulfill his mission. But Yahweh seems not to cooperate with his chosen prophet or to care about his suffering.

Psalm 63: 2-6, 8-9 "My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God."

The origin and inspiration of this downbeat psalm might have been the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian armies in 586 B.C. (during Jeremiah's lifetime). All Jews, then and still today, have lamented the destruction of their homeland and subsequent descent into exile and slavery. Jeremiah's fellow Jews considered him of little worth. So, King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army, left him behind with all others considered of no use to them. Listen: [My Soul is Thirsting](#) by [Michael Joncas](#)

Romans 12: 1-2 "Do not let yourselves be shaped by the world where you live."

In this brief passage, Paul begs Roman Christians to learn how to discern between good and evil. To remain true to their Christian baptism, Catholics too need spiritual discernment as we plow our way through a mostly secular society. Conflicting options rain down on us every moment of every day. Some good, others not so good—or downright evil.

Matthew 16: 21-27 "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path. You are thinking not as God does, but as people do."

In last week's gospel passage, Jesus bestowed upon Peter the keys of the kingdom. Now, we hear him call Peter "Satan," publicly and right to his face. Our

question might be, how can Peter be keeper of the keys and a vehicle of Satan at the same time? Where does that leave us?

A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah (20: 7-9)

Yahweh, you have seduced me
and I let myself be seduced.
You have taken me by force and prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all day long;
they all make fun of me,
for every time I speak I have to shout,
“Violence! Devastation!”
Yahweh’s word has brought me
insult and derision all day long.

So I decided to forget about him
and speak no more in his name.
But his word in my heart becomes
like a fire burning deep within my bones.
I try so hard to hold it in, but I cannot do it.

Personal Reflection

Yahweh seems not to cooperate with his chosen and faithful prophet or care about his suffering.

— *Can I recall a point in my own life when God seemed not to care about my needs or listen to my prayerful pleadings? What was it all about? How did it conclude?*

We might think being spared exile (left behind) turned out to be a lucky break for Israel’s inhabitants. Yet, the bedraggled, abandoned remnant had to “start from scratch”—finding a way to live together, organizing a new social order, and moving on with their lives. It appears not to have worked out very well. Many, including Jeremiah, decided to leave the chaos of Israel and emigrate to Egypt, where society might, at least, offer greater stability.

— *Have I ever been abandoned (left behind, betrayed) by someone I thought I could count on? Can I name and picture that person today? What were the circumstances? What feelings arise when I recall that experience, that individual? How did I recover and move on with my life?*

— *Following up on the above question, can I describe how that former rejection fits, in some mysterious way, into the grand story of God’s work in my life?*

Antiphon: Psalm 63 (2-6, 8-9)

After the defeat

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

O God, you have rejected us and have broken our defenses;
you have been angry; but now turn back to us.

You have shaken the land and torn it open;
mend its cracks, for it totters.

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

You have made your people suffer;
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.

You set the banner behind us;
and your people fled from bow and arrow.

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

God has spoken in his Sanctuary:
“In triumph I will divide up Shechem
and parcel out the Valley of Succoth.
Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter.

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

Personal Reflection

In praying this psalm, we feel the pain of both the exiled Israelites and their abandoned fellow Jews.

— *When have I ever felt the pain of being dismissed as somehow unfit, unqualified, unworthy of “doing the job,” or of not being taken seriously? How did that affect my life going forward—even to the present day? How have I overcome that moment of dismissal and proved myself worthy of being listened to, taken seriously?*

A true Garrotto family story: My father’s youngest brother grew up being told he was the dumb one, that he would never amount to anything. As a young man, he went into the construction industry in and around San Mateo, CA. He became so successful that he won the contract to build the whole complex that now includes Mills Hospital.

— *What is my “survival” story? How have I overcome any negative circumstances related to my upbringing? How dedicated am I to “leaving no one behind”—meaning, how good am I at discovering others’ gifts and encouraging them to pursue their*

dreams? What example(s) can I recall of the positive effects of offering encouragement and support to others who thought themselves dumb, untalented, incapable, unworthy.

Second Reading: From St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (12: 1-2)

“I beg you, dearly beloved, by the mercy of God, to give yourselves, as a living and holy sacrifice, pleasing to God; that is the kind of worship for you, as sensible people. Don’t let yourselves be shaped by the world where you live, but, rather, be transformed, through the renewal of your mind. You must discern the will of God: what is good, what pleases, what is perfect.”

Personal Reflection

“Don’t let yourselves be shaped by the world where you live, but, rather, be transformed, through the renewal of your mind.”

Options and decisions rain down on me every moment of every day. Some good, others not so good, or even downright evil. To remain true to my Christian baptism, I need to be a person guided by spiritual discernment.

- *How do I go about making important decisions that will guide my current and future actions? Can I identify with clarity my decision-making process?*
- *To what extent are my thoughts, beliefs, and daily decisions shaped by societal standards and values? How do I see this present and at work in my everyday life? Am I ok with that? If I want to live my life by a more God-centered decision making process, where do I begin?*

[If you would like more information/instruction on the meaning of “spiritual discernment and decision making,” send an email to algarrotto@comcast.net.]

Proclamation from the Gospel according to Matthew (16: 21-27)

“From that day, Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem; that he would suffer many things from the Jewish authorities, the chief priests and the teachers of the law; and that he would be killed and be raised on the third day.

“Peter took him aside and began to reproach him, ‘Never, Lord! No, this must never happen to you!’

“Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path. You are thinking not as God does, but as people do.’

“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If you want to follow me, deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. For whoever chooses to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life, for my sake, will find it. What will one gain by winning the whole world, if he destroys his soul? Or what can a person give, in exchange for his life?’

Know, that the Son of Man will come, in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, and he will reward each one according to his deeds.”

Personal Reflection

“Jesus said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path. You are thinking not as God does, but as people do.’”

Wow! Just last week, Jesus gave Peter the keys of responsibility for guiding the community going forward in his absence.

— *In calling Peter “Satan,” what was he really saying in that one terrible word? If I were to repeat Jesus’ words without using the one word, Satan, how might I word it:*

If I were one of Jesus’ disciples witnessing that moment, what would I be thinking?

Shelter-in-Place

With the opening of colleges and universities, we are already seeing an increase of corona virus cases among young adults. Why? In part, it’s because it’s in the nature of students to feel immortal and therefore immune to an invisible virus. The same can be said of high school students.

— *If I have high school and/or college-age students in my family, what advice am I giving them?*

— *What decisions have I made about exposing my children to in-person education. How will these decisions affect the students, my whole family—and me?*

Newspapers and other media sources tell us that at least 7 million school-age children in the U.S. do not have computers and/or high-speed internet access.

— *How might educators reach out to students left behind by online learning? What can I do to help?*

Write about your feelings and your lived experience during your journaling time (below).

Journaling Prompts

What insights have I gained from reflecting on the readings for the 21st Sunday of Ordinary Time and my current social demands and restrictions. Suggested prompt:

— *After reflecting on the readings, what made the deepest impression on me?*

We mustn't simply be grateful "recipients" of God's good gifts. We need to be "givers," too.

— *How will this week's Scriptures and current societal events impact the way I think, live, love—and "give back"—during the week ahead?*

For Inspirational Viewing / Listening

View:

A dramatic interpretation of [Matthew 16:23](#), "Get behind me, Satan!"

Watch the [trailer](#) for the feature-length film, ["40, The Temptation of Christ."](#) This film offers an exceptionally good dramatization of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness and the temptations. Former CTK parishioner, Mateo Ray Garcia, plays Jesus as a child in flashback scenes. Now available for rent at \$0.99 on Amazon Prime TV. (Rates 4.5 stars on IMDB.com)

Preview of Next Session

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 33: 7-9 "For your part, son of man, I have set you as a watchman for Israel; and when you hear my word, you must give them my warning."

Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-9 "Come, let us sing to Yahweh, let us make a joyful sound to the Rock of our salvation."

Romans 13: 8-10 "Do not be in debt to anyone. Let this be the only debt of one to another: Love."

Matthew 18: 15-20 "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there, among them."

Closing Prayer (edited and abridged for use here)

A prayer as we face the Coronavirus (COVID-19)
by [Right Rev. Colin Sinclair](#)

Living God,

In my hour of need, I turn again to you, for I have nowhere else to turn.

I put my faith in you, because you have proved your faithfulness time and again.

I thank you that you are not distant but have drawn near, in your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

He understands my worries and fears.

I pray for an end to this worldwide pandemic, remembering all who have lost loved ones, and remember those seriously ill at this time.

I pray for doctors and nurses and all in the caring professions, and for those working behind the scenes.

Bless those working to create an effective remedy.

I pray for those laid off as their work disappears;

I include those who cannot visit loved ones in locked-down care homes;

God of grace and mercy, hear my prayer.

Strengthen me by your Spirit, so that I may look out for others, showing love in action and bringing encouragement, hope and peace; always trusting in you, our Rock and our Redeemer.

I bring these prayers to you in Jesus' name.

Amen.

— Source: Church of Scotland.org

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

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(follow the link above to the novel Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words)

An Invitation: I will be a featured author [online](#) at "Art Embraces Words" (Lamorinda Arts Assn.) this coming Sunday, Aug. 30, 2-3:30 pm. I'll read the first chapter of my 2020 novel, *Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words*. There is no fee to attend. To register as an audience member for this event, follow this link before Sunday:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QPiGMeW-QJGHt7_hwAMPGA