



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

September 27, 2015

Introduction to the Word:

Our Message Series continues: *A Way Forward*. It's all about doing what disciples do and, in the process, finding our way to more successful living

Week One invited us to be “of God”. To know that we belong to Him, that we accomplish what we do with His inspiration and that we must be people who are firmly rooted not solely in our religious tradition, but also our ability to relate to the person of Jesus.

Week Two challenged us to take *the last place*, to be *servants*. The only way we know who we are is by who He is – and that comes through service especially to the least, the last and the lost.

The Gospel of today, as Jesus talks to us about the importance of our example for others. He uses dramatic and severe examples of how serious our rejection of temptation and sin should be. By sharing in His life, He is empowering us to choose grace over temptation, and redemption over condemnation. Today's challenge highlighted in the readings is that we have to actively *wage* peace, *promote* it, and base our critical decisions on the common good as we make our Way Forward – one rooted in peace which comes not from an outwardly found happiness but an inwardly rooted happiness.

Warm-Up: You are invited to respond to one more of the following questions:

i) What makes you happy? Name outward things, but also inward things.

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Leader: God has entrusted us with so much, because he is with us, leads and guides us.

Lord Jesus, you call us to responsibility and stewardship, Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the source of grace and redemption in our lives Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you protect us from temptation and sin Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)



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FIRST READING (Numbers 11: 25–29)

The Lord came down in the cloud, took some of the spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders. When the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (James 5:1–6)

Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire.

You have laid up treasure for the last days. Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Mark 9:38-45)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After Jesus had finished teaching the disciples, John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

[At this point please use the video Message for this series – Week # 3](#)

[Your group may wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord’s Day Message](#)



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There is always a unique and strong relation between the First Reading and the Gospel in the Liturgy of the Word. Today's readings reflect this. Both of them speak of an 'unauthorized' person doing the work of God. In both cases, Moses and Jesus help the others to know that God is at work, and at work beyond the confines that we may place upon God. His grace and power goes to whom He chooses, and to those who open themselves to His influence and power.

This Way Forward requires of us a joyfulness or happiness, for otherwise we like those in the readings are living with a suspicion instead. In the First Reading God abundantly blesses the people, in particular with the gift of prophesy. His power was so great that he even blessed Eldad and Medad, who were not present with the others of the community when they received the spirit of God that had been given first to Moses. Moses, corrects Joshua, and assures him that (in my words) God knows what he is doing. There is a lesson in this for all of us!

In our Second Reading St. James delivers words of condemnation to the people. Their irresponsibility will bring them suffering and retribution. Retribution, because they have been the lucky ones, they have had the opportunities that others have not, and they have misused that influence and power. They have been responsible for the suffering of others. They have been selfish, unjust, and cruel. Their riches and treasures will not save them—rather they will condemn them. I can imagine that the words of James, like those of Jesus, were met with disgust by those to whom they were directed. They did not want to listen, as that would make them reflect on his words and recognize the call of God to respond in a responsible, selfless, just and loving way. Such is our human condition without the grace of God!

Although we may think of our Gospel as filled with condemnation, there is a glimmer of hope. Jesus tells us that "For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward." Again – to be "of God" and to be "people of service". But here we come to understand the next step – we must also walk on this Way Forward as people of mercy!

Mercy paves the way for peace with self, with others, with God. Mercy roots us in peace. A peace that comes from within. A peace that comes from Him and is founded on His principles. Without this peace we live as people of judgement, we live as people who are self-absorbed, we live lives that are self centered and we live without happiness or joy.

The Message this week – Are you of Happy? Do you have Mercy in your life ?

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: *(15-20 minutes)*

" For whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:38-45, 45, 47-48)



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Jesus alone knows the secrets of each human heart, mind and spirit. In our human condition, sometimes our exterior and our interior are not in sync. Our appearance (or even our self-awareness) may appear in line with Christ, but our heart, mind, spirit and will may be far away. Is that not often how we explain our sinfulness? The comedian Flip Wilson use to say, "The devil made me do it." Perhaps there are also 'demons' that keep us from living fully this message of the Gospel.

- a) How conscious am I of the example I set for others—at home, at work, at school, and with my friends?
- b) How do I deal with sometimes being a "stumbling block"?
- c) What do I need to "cut out" of my life, in order to live more fully my life in Christ?

Closing Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. The intent is to "outreach" to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT

- Consider this week an act of Mercy in the name of your prayer partner, not toward them, but toward someone else who may have hurt you - but do it in the name of your prayer partner.
- Continue to consider together as a group a social outreach which connects to our parish – our Haiti Mission, commitment to sponsoring a family at Advent, bringing "Canadian Tire Dollars", making quilts.

Group Action:

- How can Mercy help you to better understand our standing questions "Who do you say that I am? How can it help you on the way?"

Looking for More:

Consider the following background and resources as follow ups for your group, or individually

- [Tuesday Night Together](#) begins on October 6th. The title is "Me, Myselfie and I". It is about discovering our life meaning as we seek to discover that we are here to Love God, Belong to Family, Serve, Go and Tell Others. [Sign up today](#)
- **Bible Study: A Biblical Walk Through the Mass:** Do you understand the meaning behind the parts of the Mass? Dr. Edward Sri will explore the roots of the words and gestures we experience at Mass and explains their profound significance in this video-based Bible Study. Dates soon.



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- *Looking for a good book?:* Archbishop Charles Chaput wrote a book “Living the Catholic Faith: Rediscovering the Basics. Written in 2001, it is still very much in mode with the questions and needed answers of today.
- We are currently planning a MARRIED LIFE CAFÉ to take place in Early November. Date to be shared soon. We will be viewing a common movie together and then beginning a series of small studies on it. [Want a preview of the movie?](#)

Have you heard about [Starting Point?](#) Check out details

Let us pray - (together)

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favors on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray united as one,

OUR FATHER...

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