



## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B  
September 12, 2021

Isaiah 50:4c-9a  
Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9  
James 2:14-18  
Mark 8:27-35

### Assembly

*(An unlit candle, a Bible opened to this week's gospel and a rose with thorns on the stem rest on a cloth-covered table in the meeting place.)*

### Beginning Prayer

*(The candle is lit. Members are invited to silently focus on God's presence. After a short time of reflection, members alternate reading the following prayer aloud.)*

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

I: I love the LORD because he has heard  
my voice in supplication,  
because he has inclined his ear to me  
the day I called.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

II: The cords of death encompassed me;

the snares of the netherworld seized upon me;  
I fell into distress and sorrow,  
and I called upon the name of the LORD,  
"O LORD, save my life!"

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

I: Gracious is the LORD and just;  
yes, our God is merciful.  
The LORD keeps the little ones;  
I was brought low, and he saved me.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

II: For he has freed my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.  
I shall walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.

All: I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

Psalm 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

## LISTEN TO THE LORD

*(The scriptures are read aloud with a pause after each reading. After the gospel is read, the leader invites members to choose a few words from the gospel that touch them.)*

*The leader asks these two questions with a pause between them: “**What does this gospel say to you?**”, “**How does this gospel affect you in your life?**” The community silently reflects on these questions. The leader invites members to share their thoughts about the Insights and Reflection Questions for the week in a single group or within smaller groups.)*

## Insights

Each of the readings this week is about accepting and embracing the suffering that may be a part of our faithful journey. In the first reading, the third servant song offered hope to the exiled Jewish people that their suffering would not be in vain. The second reading reminds us that true

faith produces love and good works for others and is not about superfluous faith that is focused on personal rewards. And finally, the gospel reading, teaches us that we must deny ourselves, pick up and carry our cross and follow Jesus in order to save ourselves.

Suffering is not fun. No one wants to suffer if they can help it, but if we are suffering, it can help us to understand that suffering makes us stronger. It can also be an opportunity to bond with Jesus. Without suffering, we may not grow or learn lessons that may be required for us to perform the tasks that we are presented with. And, as Jesus tells us, suffering ultimately leads to great joy.

The 2016 movie *Priceless* is based on a true story about a man down on his luck who took a cross country truck driving job that paid cash because he was desperate for money. Along the way, he discovered that his ‘cargo’ was two sisters who were secretly being transported to a dangerous sex trafficking ring. Once he discovered the truth, he managed to save the girls and shut down the operation. The conclusion of the movie portrayed the man and one of the sisters embarked on a mission to help other people who were preyed upon by nefarious people. If the man and the woman had never gone through the trials they endured they would not have had the interest or the drive to make helping others their mission in life.

As Jesus tells us, beyond suffering there is hope and joy. For some, that hope and joy is in this world, for others it is in heaven. When you are suffering and see no hope, remember that Jesus is with you and that he offers an eternal end to suffering when you take up your cross and follow him.

### **Reflection Questions**

- ◆ When you endured the worst suffering in your life, how did Jesus help you through it?
- ◆ What does the term ‘take up your cross’ mean to you?
- ◆ What are some of the most meaningful lessons you have learned after enduring deep suffering?

### **Suggestions for Action**

- ◆ Bring joy to another who has withstood extreme suffering. Bring them a gift (flowers, baked goods, chocolates, etc.) and share time with them.

- ◆ Lighten the load for someone in your community who is suffering by running errands, cleaning their house, making them dinner, driving them to doctor appointments, walking their dog, etc.
- ◆ Advocate for those who have suffered more than you. Volunteer for a reputable organization that helps those who need it. Contact the Office for Catholic Charities in your archdiocese to find ways you can help others.

## HEAR THE LORD

*(After about fifteen minutes of sharing, the leader poses these questions: “How has the sharing from this session affected you?”, “How will it change you this week?” The leader allows a moment for members to reflect before inviting them to share their thoughts.)*

*The leader reads a selection from the readings aloud. Following the reading, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What is Jesus saying to you?”, “What is your response?” The community pauses to reflect on these questions. After a time of reflection, the leader invites members to share what they hear Christ saying to them.)*

## Closing Prayer

*(The leader plays the song "The Beatitudes" found at [www.insightsbooks.com](http://www.insightsbooks.com). Click on the Music link and select the appropriate week. After the song is complete, members alternate reading the following prayer aloud.)*

### Great Joy

I:           The pain in my body  
              Keeps me awake  
              Sears through my limbs  
              Makes my head ache

II:           Lord give me hope  
              That the end is in sight  
              I look toward the day  
              When I dance in your light

I:           The passage of days  
              Brings me closer to you

I pray they go quickly  
Then my soul will renew

II:       Keep me focused on you Lord  
          Not on what can't be changed  
          But on the joy of the future  
          When body and soul exchanged

*(Members exchange a sign of peace. The candle is extinguished.)*

