

[117] **TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME B**

FIRST READING

We will serve the Lord God, because he is our God.

A reading from the book of Joshua

24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b

Joshua brought together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem.
Then he told their leaders, judges, and officials
to come into the presence of God.

Joshua told all of them what the Lord, the God of Israel, had said.
He also told them, "If you don't want to serve the Lord,
then today you must choose the god you will serve.
You may choose the gods your ancestors worshiped
on the other side of the river.
Or you may even choose one of the gods of the Amorites,
since you are living in their land.
But as for me and everyone in my family,
we will serve the Lord!"

The people answered,
"We will never turn away from the Lord to serve other gods!
It was the Lord who brought us and our ancestors out of Egypt.
And with our own eyes we saw the powerful miracles he performed
to protect us during all the time
that we traveled through the nations.
The Lord is our God, and we will serve him too!"

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

34:1-2, 17-18, 19-20

R. (9a) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord..

I will always praise the Lord.
With all my heart,
I will praise the Lord.
Let all who are helpless
listen and be glad.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

When his people pray for help,
he listens and he rescues them
from their troubles.

The Lord is there to rescue
all who are discouraged
and have given up hope.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

The Lord's people
may suffer a lot,
but he will always
bring them safely through.
Not one of their bones
will ever be broken.

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

SECOND READING

Honor your father and your mother.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

6:1-4

Children, you belong to the Lord,
and you do the right thing when you obey your parents.
The first commandment with a promise says,

“Obey your father and your mother,
and you will have a long and happy life.”

Parents, don't be hard on your children.
Raise them properly.
Teach them and instruct them about the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

See John 6:63, 68c

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Your words, Lord, are spirit and life;
you have the words of everlasting life.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

To whom shall we go?
You have the words of everlasting life.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

6:60-69

Many of Jesus' disciples heard him speak
about the bread of life and said,
"This is too hard for anyone to understand."

Jesus knew that many of his disciples were grumbling.
So he asked, "Does this bother you?
What if you should see the Son of Man
go up to heaven where he came from?"

"The Spirit is the one who gives life!
Human strength can do nothing.
The words that I have spoken to you are from that life-giving Spirit.
But some of you refuse to have faith in me."

Jesus said this,
because from the beginning he knew who would have faith in him.
He also knew which one would betray him.

Then Jesus said, "You cannot come to me,
unless the Father makes you want to come.
That is why I have told these things to all of you."

Because of what Jesus said,
many of his disciples turned their backs on him
and stopped following him.

Jesus then asked his twelve disciples if they were going to leave him.
Simon Peter answered,
"Lord, there is no one else that we can go to!
Your words give eternal life.
We have faith in you,
and we are sure that you are God's Holy One."

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The gospel of the Lord.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME — Cycle B

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us your “Spirit and Life.” We are happy when we choose to be life-guards of your Spirit and Life. We want to follow you forever. AMEN.

Readings: Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Ps 34; Ephesians 5:21-32; John 6:60-69

Why do some DECIDE to do the right thing and others don't? Why do some BELIEVE and others don't? Each day many times a day, we have to make choices.

Often doing the right thing is very difficult. Sometimes we even think: “No one can believe that?” “No one can be that good.” “No one will know if I do or don't do this.” But God knows. God's voice speaks in our heart, it is Spirit and life. We are free to choose—over and over: To follow or not. To listen or not. To believe or not.

All our life we grow in understanding the challenge to live as Jesus asks. We deepen our FREELY GIVEN YES every day. We have to reflect on the Word of God, as Spirit and Life, every day, if we are to grow into truly serving the Lord. We grow in our conviction that Jesus is “the Holy One of God.”

Activities: You will need to make ahead of time, hand bracelets. Make sure you know how you are going to secure them. Tape or Yarn is best...not glue.

Make hand bracelets with the words: I WILL SERVE THE LORD.

Inquire of the children how their choices were during the week. Were they good life-guards? What was hard? What choices did they make? (If too many children were not present last week, summarize quickly about last week's sharing.)

What things make it hard to serve the Lord? What are the things that help us serve the Lord? (Make sure the children mention, “We help others serve the Lord.”)

If Jesus heard us murmuring about how hard it is to “follow” him and asked us: “Do you also want to leave?” What would we say?

To conclude the session: Explain to the group, at the end of the prayer, I will say, “We will serve the Lord,” and then I gesture and everyone will say the phrase together: We will serve the Lord. AMEN.

Dear Jesus, thank you for being patient with us when we make bad choices. We know you see our hearts and know we want to do the right thing; the good thing; the loving thing. Help us to serve you this week. Gesture for the children to respond: WE WILL SERVE THE LORD. AMEN.