

[126] **TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME B**

FIRST READING

I gave my body to those who struck me.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

50:4-8a

The Lord All-Powerful gives me just the right words
to comfort the weary.
Each morning he makes me eager to learn his teaching.

The Lord All-Powerful made me willing to listen
and not rebel or run away.
and so, I let them beat my back and pull out my beard.
I didn't turn aside when they made fun of me
and spit in my face.

But the Lord God keeps me from being embarrassed.
And I refuse to give up,
because I know I will never be ashamed.
My Protector is nearby.
No one can stand here and accuse me of any wrong.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

116:1-2, 5-6, 8-9

R. (9a) I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

I love you, Lord!
You answered my prayers.
You paid attention to me,
and so I will pray to you
as long as I live.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

You are kind, Lord,
and good and merciful.
You protect ordinary people,
and when I was helpless,
you saved me.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

You, Lord, have saved
my life from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.
now I will walk at your side
in this land of the living.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

SECOND READING

Faith without good works is dead.

A reading from the letter of James

2:14-18

My friends,
what good is it to say you have faith,
when you don't do anything
to show that you really do have faith?
Can that kind of faith save you?

If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food,
you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you.
I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat."

What good is it to say this,
unless you do something to help?
Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!

Suppose someone disagrees and say,
"It is possible to have faith without doing kind deeds."

I would answer, "Prove that you have faith without doing kind deeds,
and I will prove that I have faith by doing them."

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

Galatians 6:14

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

My only glory is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which crucifies the world to me and me to the world.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

you must take up your cross and follow me.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark

8:31-35

Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him.

He said, "The nation's leaders, the chief priest,
and the teachers of the Law of Moses
will make the Son of Man suffer terribly.

He will be rejected and killed,
but three days later he will rise to life."

Then Jesus explained clearly what he meant.

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that.
But when Jesus turned and saw the disciples,
he corrected Peter.

He said to him, "Satan, get away from me!
You are thinking like everyone else and not like God."

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer,
and he said:

"If any of you want to be my followers,
you must forget about yourself.
You must take up your cross and follow me.

If you want to save your life,
you will destroy it.
But if you give up your life for me and for the good news,
you will save it."

The gospel of the Lord.

Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time—Cycle B

Opening Prayer

Invite the children to echo each line.

Jesus, our brother and friend,....
Open our ears.....
To hear the message.....
of these Scripture readings.....
Open our hearts.....
To follow in your footsteps.....
even when it is hard.....
Make us more like you.....
Amen....

Readings

Isaiah 50: 4-8

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

James 2: 14-18 (optional)

Mark 8: 31-35

Reflection

The first reading and the gospel may be challenging to discuss with children because of the mistreatment of the character in Isaiah and the imminent suffering of Jesus in the Gospel. Yet, it may be an opportunity to discuss mistreatment they have felt at school (possible bullying) or how they have treated or mistreated others. The Isaiah reading ends with a confidence that God is with them, giving them courage. Jesus, in the gospel, admits that he will suffer, and that all of us will have hard times/suffer (carry crosses of worry, fear, sadness). But if we are followers of Jesus, we will carry the crosses and handle them with the help of Jesus.

Activity

Materials: Paper crosses (approx. 10-12 inches tall) cut from construction paper; one per child. Place the crosses as a centerpiece for the children to notice before the Scripture sharing begins.

Before the first reading, ask the children to listen for a word or phrase, or to get a picture in their mind as the reading is proclaimed.

After the first reading ask for volunteers to name their word, phrase or image. It's not necessary to comment on each answer. Summarize by saying that the story character was being made fun of in the reading, but that God was by his side, protecting and sticking up for the one who was being teased. Some children may identify with this experience. Being made fun of is a hardship or a "cross" to carry or handle.

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As the gospel is proclaimed ask the children to listen for what Jesus says about a cross.

Discuss what the Gospel said was going to happen to Jesus. (He would suffer terribly, be killed, but would rise three days later).

Now, ask what they heard about a cross. The followers of Jesus need to take up their cross and follow him. Ask if anyone can name some crosses (difficult things such as being teased, made fun of, worries about school, family, a hard class or test...)

Invite the children to stand and choose a paper cross from the centerpiece; then, to hold it close to their heart. Have the children silently think of something that is hard for them and to pray that they can be followers of Jesus and trust in him to help them "carry their cross". Some may wish to share their cross aloud.

Now have them turn to another person and touch crosses as a way of showing that we can pray for each other and the crosses we carry.

Conclude with a short prayer or sung refrain about following Jesus.