**ORDINARY TIME 15 C Lectionary Catechesis**

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| On first reading these passages may seem disconnected, however the key word may be “decisiveness”. It all begins with the decision of the Father on the side of mercy in sending His Son. This word or practice is not normally associated with American Catholicism as we have not yet been evangelized or completed our discipleship. Instead, there is bloodshed everywhere, the poor cry out, and peace and justice are out on the curb. The decision for us is to encounter and accompany. That’s the theme of these readings. |

**FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30, 10-14**

Moses sets before the people covenant choice for the sake of the community’s security, prosperity, justice, and peace. Moses comes to the end of his speeches in Deuteronomy. The commandments of God are rigorous, but not mysterious. Indeed they are in our mouths, our hearts, and our whole being. They are present to us, as it were, naturally. Living according to the “inner voice” which God placed in us I the first place leads to the “good life.” The Church would intend this passage choice to pair with the story of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan knew instinctively and interiorly the right thing to do; in other words God’s law was firmed footed in his heart and whole being.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Where does the sense of God’s laws come from within us?  Why does Moses insist on “mouth” and “heart” do you think? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the internal law within you that you live by?  How is conscience formed? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How do works of social justice and professions of faith work together?  Share what you do in your parish that fulfills God’s commandments. |
| **WORSHIP** | How is God’s covenant manifest during the liturgy?  How does our Eucharist connect to the parable of the Good Samaritan? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 69, 14. 17. 30-31. 33-34. 36. 37 (Psalm19 is the alternate this Sunday)**

A cry in the midst of pain, this psalm in the context of the first reading and the gospel story of the Good Samaritan, represents the victim of the maltreatment by robbers, and all who are victims of injustice occurring as a result of not keeping the interior law of God. The psalm begins with Exodus imagery of the fear of drowning while crossing the sea. The psalmist takes the overwhelming threat of destruction as a consequence of being “mired in sin”, which is much more explicit language in the original. The petitioner, having finally recognized the true state of things, now turns to God with a petition to be saved. From vs. 30 to the end of the psalm, most of our responsorial, the petitioner turns to God in praise, and finally, the psalmist leaps from a personal petition to one of the whole people of the nation.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What about this psalm challenges your faith?  What does God give us? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why do we so often need to be “in the trenches” before call out to God for help in prayer?  What is the favorable time to pray to God, as the psalmist states in vs. 14? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What does it mean for you to hear the poor in your life and share your life with them?  God has a preferential option for the poor; God hears them. What is the message of the Church to the poor in return? |
| **WORSHIP** | Explain why the intercessory prayers, are really called “universal prayers” and should never be totally personalized or individualized. An example of this are Masses with a stipend for only one person.  When we pray, why is mercy our central petition before God? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Colossians 1, 15-20 Hymn to Christ**

This passage is one of the great Christological Hymns of the letters of the Pauline corpus. He is thanking the Father for the gift of Jesus, His Son, because now our sins are forgiven through His great power. The hymn praises God for the reconciliation we have in Christ, “by the blood of his cross.” The hymn possesses major doctrinal truths about the being of Christ, and yet at the same time, the conclusion of the hymn is not only about doctrinal truths, but a soteriology. In other words the hymn is about the purpose of Christ, our reconciliation with God. So this is both a hymn about Christ’s identity in his own person, but about his work of salvation. The very next verses, not included in the reading makes very clear our own collaboration with God’s great purpose. This is the connection with the Good Samaritan parable. It is all about forgiveness, mercy, and the interior law of the heart and conscience.

**Vss. 15-20: CCC 2641** Song is a form of worship incorporated by Christians from the beginning, using psalms and composing new hymns to celebrate the Christian mysteries.

**Vs. 15: CCC 241, 299, 381, 1701** First, Jesus is the Word of God, “one in being” (consubstantial) with the Father. Second, this hymn reflects the order of God’s creation through wisdom, and God speaks to us through this creation about God’s very nature and existence. Creation is God’s great good gift. Third, our human work is to reproduce the goodness of God and the image of God. Finally, the human person was created in the image of God, now distorted and disordered by sin. Grace restores us.

**Vs. 16-17 CCC 291** Everything created was made in, for, and through Christ the Word of God.

**Vs. 16: CCC 331** Christ is the center of the visible and invisible cosmos. All the angels serve Christ.

**Vss. 18-20: CCC 624** Christ “tasted death” for us; the CCC puts it in perspective of the ultimate Sabbath rest after the work of salvation on the cross. It is a share in the peace of Christ.

**Vs. 18: CCC 504, 658, 753, 792** The conception of Jesus begins a new creation, into which we are called by his fullness of grace. There are many Biblical images for the mystery of the Church, such a wedding images, royal imagery, and agricultural images. Christ is in all ways “pre-eminent” and “first.”

**Vss. 20-22: CCC 2305** The peace of Christ is reflected in peace on earth among us. By his blood, he reconciles us to the Father. This blood is the seal, presence, and gift of his peace.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?”  How does blood make peace? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | If Christ is the image of the invisible God, in what way then do you image Christ?  Share your reflection on the fact that Christ is before all things, in your life. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What place does this sort of theology have in evangelization?  How do we share peace in our lives and in our world today? |
| **WORSHIP** | Most of the Eucharistic Liturgy is addressed to the Father. What is the role of Christ in the liturgy?  Can you think of a similar contemporary hymn used in your parish? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 10, 25-32 The Good Samaritan**

Luke bookends the parable with the great love commandment teaching and at the end with the incident at Martha and Mary’s house when the problem of service and hospitality come up. A “scholar of the law” asks the question about who is my neighbor, a question that the law cannot answer. Jesus’ response is not legalistic, but rather a parable of the Kingdom of God to which the scholar of the law must answer, correctly, with mercy. At the same time, let it be known that the scholar was somewhere in the audience being taught, “he stood up to test him.” (vs. 25) In other words, the overall context is the decisiveness of discipleship. The contemporary context is our response to and treatment of the immigrant and the refugee. The roads of our time are littered with the wreckage of humanity. The cry of the blood roars deafeningly. The priest and the levite busied themselves to fulfill the ritual laws of purity. The parable resources the language of Pope Francis of encounter (approaching) and accompaniment; this is the language of evangelization. So often the point taken focuses on the persons to be cared for, and yet a certain emphasis here is on the authentic nature of the person attentive to the caring.

**Vss. 25-37: CCC 2822** Quoting I Tim 2, 3-4 (note how easy it is to memorize the numbers of this passage), God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

**Vss. 27-37: CCC 1825** Christ died for us while we were still sinners and enemies of God. Our neighbor are those even farthest away.

**Vs. 27: CCC 2083** The CCC uses the great love commandment to preface all the other commandments. Our duty to God is interwoven with our duty to one another.

**Vs. 34: CCC 1293** In the portion on the sacrament of Confirmation, anointing is a spiritual seal. Anointing has rich Biblical symbolism including abundance and joy. Oiled, the body shines with health and beauty. Oil heals.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How are we justified, by the law or by love?  How does prejudice and bigotry disable and destroy the Church’s evangelizing work?  (cf. CCC 2822) |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What charitable cause are you involved in?  What is your response to immigration and refugees? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share how you think the corporal works of mercy shows forth your dicsipleship more than words.  Reflect on the words “encounter” and “accompaniment.” |
| **WORSHIP** | What sacraments are evoked in the anointing of the man who was beaten and robbed?  In what way is the Church at Eucharist the modern “innkeeper”? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 16 C: Genesis 18, 1-10a; Psalm 15; Colossians 1, 24-28; Luke 10, 38-42**