**Ordinary Time 8 A Lectionary Catechesis**

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| We are given much wisdom for the disciple beginning the journey with Jesus about God’s providence, about the necessity of reconciliation before discipleship, about our stewardship in our ministries, God’s parental love, and even a few notes regarding our right relationship with animals and created world. We are taught by Jesus himself about our prayers of petition. It will be hard to choose one of these topics and drill down into only one more richly. A number of these points are problematic for the modern person. |

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 49, 14-15**

These two short verses are loaded with great meaning for us. It is the fundamental cry of our human loneliness in our human condition, especially in the modern world of technology. The prophet’s ministry reminds us of the constancy of God’s love. The comparable human image is mother and infant, much used in pro-life rationale for opposing abortion. Because the larger context is the consolation of communion with God, the text argues for our human communion from the womb (conception) forward as a basis for a pro-life conviction. In other words, behind this text, is also a rich theology of reconciliation present in our shared human communion with one another. The modern person is enslaved to an individualism that isolates us from one another.

**Vss. 1-15: CCC 219, 370** God is love. We’ve heard the biblical expression that we are made in the image and likeness of God, but the reverse is not true, which is to say that God is not made in our human image and likeness as they appeared to be made in the statuary of the classical Greeks and the nations surrounding ancient Israel.

**Vs. 15: CCC 239** Reflecting on God’s parental tenderness the Catechism has us understand how the language of faith can arise out of our human experiences, hence the connection of creature to and with God. Please also necessarily read CCC #339 as the environmental complement to this citation.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share your personal definition of God.  Why does so much Christian art attempt to portray God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in human images? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How is communion a consolation to you?  How do we respond to God’s love? In what way does this love extend to all of creation? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Why is reconciliation work a part of the Eucharist and evangelization?  How does a communion with Jesus console the modern person? |
| **WORSHIP** | What does a Catholic do with art like statues, paintings, icons, architecture in Churches or at home?  Do Catholics worship statues? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 62, 2-3. 6-7. 8-9**

Or as St. Augustine wrote: “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” Three times each is God called “my rock” and “my salvation.” The other verses in this psalm repeat this theme of trust and at the same time enumerate the sins of the “highly placed people.”

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does the soul only find authentic rest/peace in God?  List the things we need saving from, or another way to say, what other things do we attempt to find rest in? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What other things does our soul attempt to find this rest?  What does the expression “You’re my rock” mean to you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How can you bring peace and rest to a situation of violence, bullying, injustice, pain, suffering, etc.?  We live in a culture where trust feels like a rare thing and fragile. How do we restore trust? |
| **WORSHIP** | How do you read this psalm as an act of worship?  What are our modern idolatries? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: I Corinthians 4, 1-5**

St. Paul writes this letter to address the problems and divisions arising in the community stirred up by various leaders. Twice after this passage, he refers to the “inflation of pride,” as some people act as if they were kings over their ministerial territory. This also happens in the modern parish. We are servants.

**Vs. 1: CCC 859, 1117** Along with being called disciples, we are also called stewards, servants, and ambassadors of the gospel as part of being an apostolic Church.

**Vs. 5: CCC 678** Among the teachings of Jesus is the Last Judgment, based on our attitude about our neighbor. Pope Francis said, “Who am I to judge?” God is the judge; no human has been assigned this task.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Define a “steward” and a “servant” of the mysteries of God?  What are the mysteries of God? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the quality of stewardship that is mentioned in the text of this passage?  What are some of the more subtle and deadly ways we judge others? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Distinguish in your group: compliments, flattery, prejudice, opinions, ill-intended words and acts.  In what way can an evangelizing person have good stewardship? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why does the priest invite the congregation to “prepare ourselves for these sacred mysteries” at the beginning of the Mass?  The last line of this passage is “then everyone will receive praise from God.” What does this mean? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 6, 24-34 Sermon on the Mount**

The gospel passage is among a collection sayings of Jesus in the larger Sermon on the Mount. Jesus connects our anxieties, worries, and distractions into a bigger context of God’s providence for the disciple. We notice, and are disturbed by the attitudes towards wealth prevalent in our culture and the complete opposite attitudes and values taught by Jesus. We live in a cultural of lavish sumptuousness, a culture of the “royal consciousness” challenged by the prophetic tradition.

**Vs. 24: CCC 2113, 2424, 2729, 2821, 2848** First we have the definition of idolatry, Mammon is money, and one of the things we idolize. “The theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable.” The “distractions” we find in our prayer point out for us what our attractions are. The petition to learn discernment of the distinction between reign of God and secular cultural progress should always be made in prayers. Finally we read a commentary on our temptations.

**Vss: 25-34: CCC 2547, 2830** Jesus grieves over the rich; abandonment to providence is very challenging. What we will have to eat is our daily bread, referring both to just portions and to the bread of the end-times.

**Vs. 25: CCC 2608** Reconciliation is prerequisite to discipleship. This conversion of heart is directed to the Father.

**Vss. 26-34: CCC 322** “Christ invites us to filial trust in the providence of our heavenly Father.”

**Vs. 26: CCC 2416** The Catechism uses this verse to remind us of our care for animals entrusted to us.

**Vss. 31-33: CCC 305** The child grasps God’s providential care.

**Vs. 32: CCC 270** God’s fatherhood is revealed in creation, omnipotence, and mercy.

**Vs. 33: CCC 1942, 2604, 2608, 2632** Reflecting on the nature of the human community, the Church teaches the principles of solidarity, which transcends our care for material goods.In “2604 Jesus gives us the secret to having “all things besides.” Jesus teaches his disciples things about prayer of petition in the Sermon. These prayers have a hierarchy of significance. First we pray “Thy Kingdom come!” Then we petition for what will welcome this kingdom and help make it come. Then we pray for the Church. There’s nothing about praying for a Mercedes Benz.

**Vs. 34: CCC 2659, 2836** The value and meaning of daily prayer is promoted here by the Church. The “day” saying of Jesus, is taken to mean “today” connected with “daily” in the Lord’s prayer. It is all God’s time.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share your definition or understanding of divine providence.  What does the CCC mean when it teaches that reconciliation is prerequisite to discipleship? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do you see God at work in your life today? In our whole world today?  How do you incorporate stewardship into your life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How can children be introduced to stewardship? Or God’s providence?  How would your future look if you were reconciled with people in your life where relationship is shattered? |
| **WORSHIP** | How does worship help us to seek God’s kingdom over us?  When and why is your heart at rest during the Mass? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 1 A: Genesis 2, 7-9. 3, 1-7; Psalm 51; Romans 5, 12-19; Matthew 4, 1-11**