



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
30th August, 2026**

Theme: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: God of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have nurtured. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:21-27

²¹ At that time: Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me Satan! You are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Gospel Focus

Until now in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has begun to reveal his identity by teaching and by signs. But after Peter proclaims him as the Christ, Jesus radically flips the disciples' expectations. Their beloved Christ must suffer and die at the hands of their own religious leaders. For anyone expecting a Messiah to restore the Davidic kingdom and establish peace, Jesus' example would not suffice. Jesus rebukes Peter with incredibly strong language, calling him "Satan" and "obstacle"—especially contrasting given Jesus' recent decision to name him "the rock." Peter's comments are reminiscent of Satan's temptation in the desert: Be an earthly king and escape death. In contrast, Jesus introduces the great paradox of the Christian life: "Whoever wishes to save his life will

lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” In chapter 10 of Matthew, Jesus warns his disciples of the hardship they will face in proclaiming the gospel. Here in chapter 16, Jesus confirms that in suffering for the gospel, they will follow in his own example. If the disciples wish to receive eternal life that Jesus promises, they must relinquish this temporal life and carry their crosses after him.

Gospel Reflection

Some years ago, a group of indigenous women in La Paz, Bolivia, reflected on today’s gospel in this way: “We women identify strongly with the crucified Christ and his sufferings. There is a strong sense of submission in our Aymara and Quechua cultures. Women submit to sexual abuse from their fathers, uncles, and husbands, with a strong sense of resignation, thinking that whatever suffering they endure, they do so silently and heroically, as their way of carrying the cross with Jesus” (quoted in Barbara E. Reid, *Taking Up the Cross: new Testament Interpretations Through Latina and Feminist Eyes*).

This particular group had come through a process of learning to interpret the gospel differently, so that their consciousness of their dignity and preciousness in God’s eyes had been heightened; thereafter they questioned the wisdom they had received for generations about how submitting to abuse and injustice was the way to identify with the crucified Christ. Gradually, as they claimed their identity, they tested out new ways of relating and brought about change for themselves and their daughters.

What these women came to discover was the way in which a misreading of today’s gospel had obliterated their sense of self and had kept them cowering in abusive relationships. How, they reasoned, could Jesus who was so intent on lifting up those who were bowed down and on healing all who suffered, have meant it otherwise for them.

One does not have to go to Bolivia to find abuse justified by such interpretations of the cross. Whether immediately visible or not, such situations can be found in almost every community. A closer look at the context of Jesus’ saying reveals that he is speaking about a particular kind of suffering that his disciples must be willing to embrace: that which comes as a direct result of following his manner of life and mission. Suffering that comes from abuse and injustice is to be resisted and eradicated to the extent possible, as Jesus did throughout his ministry.

Moreover, the saying about denial of self is not referring to giving up certain pleasures, like forgoing chocolate during Lent. Rather, it refers to a disciple’s choice to lose oneself entirely in Christ—to take on Christ’s way of life and mission and his very identity as one’s own. This identity does not center on suffering, but on the love of God, expressed through loving service to one another, intent on bringing forth life to the full for all. But not all will welcome such a manner of living and loving that undermines systems of domination and submission. The repercussions one is willing to risk for the sake of living and proclaiming the gospel—that is the cross. For these women at La Paz, a newfound understanding of the gospel was born in meetings in which they were able to join in solidarity to share experiences and to reflect together with new eyes on the Scriptures. From this grew their sense of being empowered, beloved by God, and able to choose to band together to confront and end the suffering they and others they loved were experiencing.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Jer 20:7-9

⁷ O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and thou hast prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; every one mocks me. ⁸ For

whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. ⁹ If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Responsorial Reading —Psalms 138:1-3, 6-8

R: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water. **(R)**

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory, for your kindness is a greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you. **(R)**

Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name. As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied, and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you. **(R)**

Second Reading — Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

226. *It means making good use of created things:* faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him:

My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.
My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.
My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you. (St. Nicholas of Flüe; cf. Mt 5:29-30; 16:24-26)

607. The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life, (Cf Lk 12:50; 22:15; Mt 16:21-23) for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation. And so he asked, "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour." (Jn 12:27) And again, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" (Jn 18:11) From the cross, just before "It is finished", he said, "I thirst." (Jn 19:30; 19:28)

1021. Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ. (Cf. 2 Tim 1:9-10) The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul--a destiny which can be different for some and for others. (Cf. Lk 16:22; 23:43; Mt 16:26; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Heb 9:27; 12:23)

Sharing and Discussion

1. Jesus gives Peter a rather stern correction ("Get behind me, Satan!"). Can you recall a time when someone who cared about you gave you a tough, necessary truth that was hard to hear at first, but ultimately helped you grow? Was it a challenge to provide a positive response?
2. Just as Jesus walked the path toward Jerusalem knowing what awaited Him, mature discipleship often requires steadfastness through spiritual dryness, aging, or relational pain. How has enduring a trial deepened your intimacy with Christ and His Passion?
3. In verse 26, Jesus asks, "For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world and forfeit their life?" Looking honestly at your daily life, how do you become aware that you've slipped into the trap of chasing worldly things over God, and what usually pulls you back to Him?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, you instructed us to take up our cross and follow you. We are never alone on this journey and we trust that you are always with us and hear us when we cry out to you. Hear the prayers we offer today and answer them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Every Saturday

Time: 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

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Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
- 3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church