Many who heard Jesus were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this?
Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?"

MARK 6:2,3



## Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

JULY 4, 2021

## Feast of Faith

Little Mysteries

Two small rites—or, as one liturgist has called them, "little mysteries"—accompany the preparation of the gifts. The priest or deacon takes a small cruet of water from the server and adds a drop of water to the wine. Then, after the elevation of the chalice (and the incensation, if incense is used), the priest washes his hands. Both of these actions were at first practical, matterof-fact realities: in the ancient world the wine was usually quite thick, and was generally mixed with water before it was drunk. And in the early church, when the faithful brought forward a great variety of gifts at this time, there was a definite need for the presider to wash his hands! But now these rites serve a purely symbolic function. The mingling of the water and wine is accompanied by a prayer that speaks of the wonderful exchange of the Mass, the mingling of Christ's divinity and our humanity. And as the priest washes his hands, he prays words of supplication from Psalm 51, acknowledging his own sinfulness in the presence of the assembly before he dares to approach the altar for this most sacred action. —Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



### No Bad News

There are many times when we say, "Tell me what I want to hear, and don't confuse me with facts." And we don't take kindly to someone who might be bold enough to snuff out our expectations.

The biggest problem with such an attitude is not that we miss out on the truth or the facts, but that we miss out on the new and surprising gifts others can give us. Like the townspeople in today's Gospel story, we too often refuse to allow others to display the talents that can be good news for us.

Today's readings call for hospitality and faith and discernment. Hospitality opens the doors of our hearts and minds to the "stranger" among us, no matter how familiar he or she may seem to be. Faith enables us to accept the gifts of others, no matter how alarming or "strange" they may seem to be. Discernment helps us discover the prophets in our midst, no matter how amazing they may seem to be. Hospitality, faith, and discernment—cultivate these. Then, nobody can bring bad news.

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## Readings for the Week

Monday: Gn 28:10-22a; Ps 91:1-4, 14-15ab;

Mt 9:18-26

Tuesday: Gn 32:23-33; Ps 17:1b, 2-3, 6-7ab,

8b, 15; Mt 9:32-38

Wednesday: Gn 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a;

Ps 33:2-3, 10-11, 18-19; Mt 10:1-7

Thursday: Gn 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5;

Ps 105:16-21; Mt 10:7-15

Friday: Gn 46:1-7, 28-30; Ps 37:3-4, 18-19,

27-28, 39-40; Mt 10:16-23

Saturday: Gn 49:29-32; 50:15-26a; Ps 105:1-4, 6-7;

Mt 10:24-33

Sunday: Am 7:12-15; Ps 85:9-14;

Eph 1:3-14 [1:3-10]; Mk 6:7-13

## Saints and Special Observances

Sunday: Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time;

Independence Day

Monday: St. Anthony Zaccaria; St. Elizabeth of

Portugal

Tuesday: St. Maria Goretti

Friday: St. Augustine Zhao Rong and

Companions

Saturday: Blessed Virgin Mary



## Today's Readings

First Reading — They shall know that a prophet has been among them (Ezekiel 2:2-5).

Psalm — Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for his mercy (Psalm 123).

Second Reading — I am content with weaknesses and hardships for the sake of Christ (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Gospel — "Where did this man get all this? Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark 6:1-6a).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from the Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.



#### Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 4, 2021

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.

— 2 Corinthians 12:9

## Idleness

Idleness is the enemy of the soul.

## The Shape Of Things

We cannot help conforming ourselves to what we love.

—St. Francis de Sales

## Treasures From Our Tradition

The American summer is officially underway, and people are on the move. Signs of hospitality are everywhere. In today's Gospel, Jesus' visit home is hardly marked by hospitality. He goes up to the bema, the elevated place for solemn public reading of the Torah, and his message is poorly received. Today, we read from the descendant of the bema, the ambo, almost an "altar of the Word of God." Many ancient ambos are preserved in Italy, decorated with marble, ivory, precious metal, and jewels. Six hundred years ago, the pulpit came into use, meant for preaching rather than proclamation of scripture. Before microphone systems, pulpits were often located halfway down the church, amid the gathered people, and not so clearly associated with the altar.

-St. Benedict

Today, the ambo (the plural is "ambone"!) is an expected feature of our worship spaces because the Word is once again proclaimed to the people. Before 1964, typically the readings were done quietly by the priest at the altar in Latin, and optionally repeated in English from the pulpit. With the restored place of scripture in our worship, a beautiful and worthy ambo, related in design to the altar table, has once again become a prominent and familiar feature of Catholic architecture.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

## Strength in Weakness

Is Paul serious? Can you imagine being content with "weaknesses, insults, hardships, and persecutions?" (2Cor 12:10) Paul never specifies what that "thorn in the flesh" was. I used to think it referred to a physical weakness, or disability. But some of the commentaries I've read say that it was a person who opposed Paul (think of a "thorn in my side.") That opponent may have been a Christian who Paul did not want to mention by name. Paul could have been proud of all that God revealed to him, and of all that he accomplished in spreading the gospel. He sees that "thorn" as God's way of keeping him humble. So instead he boasts about his weaknesses. He knows that all the good work he has done have been accomplished by Christ. So he accepted suffering, rejection, setbacks and persecution because they helped him see how much Christ was doing through him. We can learn a lot from St. Paul. Remember how Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself. Paul loved himself in the good sense of accepting his faults and weaknesses. He was always aware that he once persecuted Christians. But that fault enabled him to experience God's forgiveness. I usually try to avoid doing things that show my weaknesses. That means I might miss a chance to see how God can help. Suppose you don't know how to swim, so you stay out of swimming pools. Of course, then you could never learn to swim. But if you get in the water and let someone teach you, you might just find yourself liking the water.

St. Paul says that when he is weak, then he is strong. He knows that God will still work through him, showing God's power to heal the sick and draw converts to Christ, in spite of Paul's weaknesses. Paul did what he could to encourage others to follow Jesus, but he knew the results of his preaching and healing were up to God. When you think that you would fail at spreading the faith, remember Paul and give your weaknesses to God.

Then see what he can do!

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Many who heard Jesus were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?"

MARK 6:2,3

#### **PAYING THE PRICE**

In the Sunday Lectionary, the first reading is usually chosen from anywhere in the Hebrew Bible to tie together with the Gospel. Currently, the second reading is from Saint Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Often the second reading is not so closely related to the day's Gospel selection, because those books are read in a more continuous fashion from week to week. But today, all three of the scripture readings go together very well. Ezekiel struggles with the job he is given by the Lord, speaking to a rebellious people. Paul is dealing with a "thorn in his side," that is, the difficulties of his own personal weakness and foibles, and learning to rely on God's grace. Mark's Gospel introduces us to a Jesus who is struggling to be believed and accepted in his native country. In all three passages, the major figures are following the will of God and paying the price of rejection by the community for their efforts.

#### I DON'T GET NO RESPECT

Years ago there was a popular comedian named Rodney Dangerfield, and he would riff about his family life or his work and his catchphrase was "I don't get no respect!" You knew this refrain was coming, and was part of the punch line, so you waited to hear it and usually laughed or groaned with it. The idea of Jesus being disrespected is a much more foreign feeling. It is easy to forget that Jesus was both human and divine. We can easily romanticize his life and ministry and forget his struggles and the difficulty he had being heard, understood, and respected, especially in his own country. Placed in the larger context of Mark's story, this was very early in Jesus' ministry, and the message he was proclaiming was not what the people wanted to hear. Jesus was not speaking about the Messiah that the Jews were hoping for. Add that together with the fact that people are often hardest on their own. Somehow "local boy makes good" just didn't sit well with them, and they didn't want to have anything to do with Jesus or his message. Jesus was caught off guard by this.

#### A MESSAGE FOR OUR TIME

There are times when being Catholic, or even being Christian is very countercultural. It used to be you belonged to a parish, and that was your home, based on your geographic boundaries or ethnicity. But now people change parishes depending on pastors, styles of music, or the Mass schedule. In these days of Covid-19, many who stayed away because of social distancing have not yet found their way back. Many never recovered from their disillusionment over the abuse scandals. Others left Catholicism for non-denominational churches, or explored other paths such as Buddhism. Still others consider themselves "spiritual but not religious" or are labeled "nones." Frequently, families who once sat together every week in church are now scattered all over the spiritual spectrum. In the face of all this, let us pray for the strength of Ezekiel to continue to preach our faith

by the lives we live, despite everything in our culture that rebels against religion. May we have the wisdom of Paul to persevere despite our weaknesses and the thorns in our side. And like Jesus, may we always find the faith we need to endure, even when those around us do not.

#### **TODAY'S READINGS**

Ezekiel 2:2–5 Psalm 123:1–2, 2, 3–4 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 Mark 6:1–6

# Irteenth Sunday Ordinary Time July 4, 2021

God is always willing to reach out to us in our need, if only we ask. Let us make these prayers, then, confident of God's listening ear.

For our Church as we seek to spread the Good News of God's saving love throughout all the world, let us pray to the Lord.

For our nation to live up to its heritage of government by all the people and in service to all the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who speak up for the poor, the downtrodden, and the people on the margins of our society, that their voice might be heard, let us pray to the Lord.

For our pastoral and community leaders to have the humility and generosity of spirit to listen to and learn from the wisdom of the people of faith in our midst, let us pray to the Lord.

For our community; may the Lord find such faith among us that he might be able to perform mighty deeds in our midst, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from COVID-19, and for all who have died, especially N., N., and N., let us pray to the Lord.

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

O God,

you are always there for those who come to you in faith.

We ask you to hear all these our prayers

which we lift up today,

and grant them in the name of Jesus Christ,

who is Lord for ever and ever.

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The Little Ones Jim Burrows





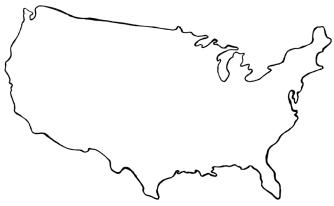
#### AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

On July 4, Americans celebrate Independence Day, when we give thanks for our country and the blessings and freedoms we share as citizens.

In 1895, a woman named Katharine Lee Bates published a poem entitled "America the Beautiful" in an issue of  $The\ Congregationalist$ . Over the years she made changes and revisions to her work, and finally in 1926 it was set to music and became the song we know today.

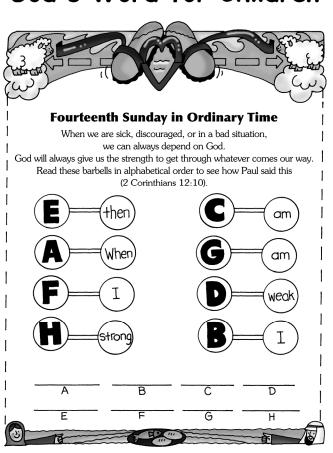
Ms. Bates recognized the beauty of our country and included what she saw in her poem. She wrote of "amber waves of grain," "purple mountains," and "fruited plains." She made reference to pilgrims, heroes, patriots, and gleaming cities. She ended many verses with a prayer that God would shed grace on our land.

These are beautiful thoughts to remember on our nation's birthday. In this map, write some of the beautiful things you love about our country. Then, like Katharine Lee Bates, say a prayer that God will continue to bless us with freedom and peace. Perhaps your family can sing this song together sometime during the day.



## God's Word for Children







2021 International Puzzle Features

## Letters from Heaven



Excerpt from the NAB © 2010, 1991, 1970, CCD

Start with the letter in the shaded square. Draw a path from letter to letter to complete the Biblical statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left and diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

Jesus said to his disciples, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin ...

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Α	Ν	U	Е

Answer: somon mmo on mi pun



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