



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 73

Reading I: Isaiah 58: 7-10

This particular chapter of the Book of the prophet Isaiah is often entitled *False and True Worship of God*. Time and again the prophets, not solely the prophet Isaiah, will remind the people that true worship of God entails seeking justice and providing for the needs of others who do not have what we have. External “shows” of holiness are meaningless to God. The fasting that God desires consists of acts of justice such as sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry and other provisions for those in need. All of these kindnesses are referred to as the Corporal Work of Mercy and these give **honor** and glory to God.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

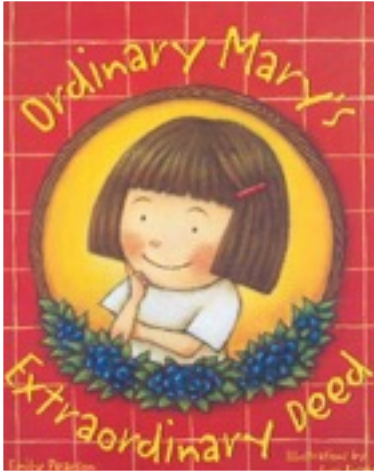
In this segment of his letter to the Church at Corinth, Saint Paul approaches the members of the church with great humility and wishes them to reflect that same humility in their lives. He invites them to learn that true worship of God manifests itself in an openness to the Spirit of God dwelling and working within them. The **honorable** person knows well that any good that is achieved is a result of God working through us. We are called, as Saint Francis of Assisi attests in his prayer, to be *God’s instrument*. To be a person of **honor** means to be an instrument through which goods works are achieved. By doing so we give glory and **honor** to God.

Gospel: Matthew 5 : 13 - 16

This section of Saint Matthew’s Gospel is preceded by the Beatitudes, which like the commandments, offer us a way to live in a faithful and loving manner. Living a life of goodness is a manner of praising and worshiping God . Doing good and acting justly is giving **honor** and glory to God. This gospel passage uses the images of salt and light to illustrate or demonstrate the call of each person to enhance the world with our presence, just as salt enhances the flavor of food. One of our charges from God is to enhance this life. Another charge is to be light, that is to allow the light of Christ to shine through our actions so that others may be drawn to Christ. We are to enhance and not detract, to illuminate and not darken.



children's
story



Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed

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ISBN-10: 0879059788

ISBN-13: 978-0879059781



character
education
activity

Honor is loving God and loving our neighbor. One of the ones that we can clearly achieve honoring God is the kindnesses we can show to others.

Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed

This wonderful story exemplifies the domino effect that one good deed may lead to another. The story is about Mary, an ordinary girl from an ordinary school, stumbling upon some ordinary blueberries on her way to her ordinary house. She picks them and gives them to her neighbor Mrs. Bishop, who starts a chain reaction of goodness that eventually makes its way back to Ordinary Mary. The story indicates clearly how these kindnesses contribute to the happiness of others. The good deeds being done in the story would be another way in which to instill in the children the idea that God is **honored** each time a good deed is done.

Activity

Step One: Using technology invite the students to research real-life examples of people who are kind. Some of them may be found at the website, www.actsofkindness.org. This website has free, downloadable materials for children and teachers, plus a great many quotes and stories.

Step Two: Have groups of students select a story, quote or activity to share with the class. Some of the other age-appropriate websites that might be helpful: www.kinderconnect.com, www.dontlaugh.org and www.tolerance.org

Additionally: Have each student draw the name of a secret pal in the classroom and do at least one random act of kindness for that person each day. As a visual create a bulletin board of all the random acts of kindnesses done. It could be seen as an **Honor of God honor roll**.

Honor involves being the most clear image of God that we can possibly be. We honor God by seeking for others what God wants for them.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

So often we think that we have to do extraordinary things to **honor** God or do something really splashy or expensive to be of service to others. In reality, simple things done with great love become extraordinary to the recipient. Sometimes just a smile or a kind word when we see someone who looks down or lonely can be a way for a person to experience God's grace. God is then given **honor** and glory by the simple kindness done to the other person.

Look Feel Know Act

The virtue of **honor** calls us to be persons of truth and integrity in thought, word, and example. The interesting thing about virtues is that even though we can mentally grasp them, living the virtue out in our lives is yet another challenge. For example I can say within my mind and my heart that helping the poor is a virtue that I believe in. However all of a sudden I have the opportunity to do so and the opportunity is going to cost me something, whether it be some of my time and talent or a monetary sum that will be a sacrifice. The truth exists in that I may know and feel the importance of the virtue such as honor but the virtue must be translated into an action that is done cheerfully and with great commitment. Living a virtuous life requires seeking congruity among the words we speak and the actions we live. In a more modern turn of phrase it is known as being able to "walk the talk." So in review, I learn what is right, I allow it to seep deep within my heart and mind and then I make a commitment to do the right thing and seek to do it in every circumstance that I am faced with in life. Look, Feel, Know, Act.

In *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deeds* we experience how a simple act of kindness serves as a catalyst for a whole system of good things happening. These good things travel from person to person and enhance the joy of living life. **Honoring** God is reflected in the kindnesses we do for others and in the midst of doing those things we meet the needs of Jesus. As it is said in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25; *as often as you do this for one of the least of your brothers or sisters, you do it for me!*

Pray that you will seek to see Jesus in every person, most especially in those who are in need. The need may not be an obvious one such as feeding the hungry, but it may be a smile or a word of encouragement that will nourish the person's spirit. There are many different types of hungers, pray that you will be able to identify them and seek to provide joyfully the need if it is within your capability.



closing
tool



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