

**TWENTY SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
YEAR B**

Opening Song

Opening Prayer

Open in prayer and invite everyone to add their own prayer. Close together:
Lord, your ways are perfect and they give us joy and refreshment. Help us to see where you are working in our midst. Amen.

Review Study Guidelines



First Reading

Numbers 11:16-17, 25-29

Setting the Stage

The first reading is from the book of Numbers. We hear about the journey of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, through the Sinai Desert, to freedom in Palestine about 1300 B.C. To lead them is too big a job for one man, so Moses listens to the advice given by his father-in-law. We hear now "the rest of the story".

Note two important features in the life of the Hebrews in their desert journey:

1. A large "Tent" is set up outside the secular campsite; it houses the Ark of the Covenant: the sacred wooden box containing the two stone tablets on which are written the Ten Commandments.

2. There is always a cloud guiding them by day; it is a symbol of the divine presence.ⁱ

Through these words God our Father shows us that *He is not limited to only one way when He wants to do something for us, His people.*

Read the first reading aloud. Reread this scripture.

What word, phrase, or idea stands out for you?

Exploring Further

1. In the verses preceding today's reading, what pressures, stresses and state of mind is Moses, in Numbers 11:10-15?
2. What advice does Jethro give to Moses in order to reduce the pressure of governing this people in Exodus 18:21-26?
3. How does God respond to Moses' request to die because the burden is too great, in Numbers 11:16-17?
4. How does God confirm the leadership of the seventy elders chosen in Numbers 11:25?

5. What happens to two men back at the main camp in Numbers 11:26?
6. What is Joshua's reaction to this occurrence in Numbers 11:28?
7. What is Moses' response in Numbers 11:29?
8. What is Jesus' response to a similar situation in Mark 9:38-41, Sunday's gospel?

Reflection

1. How have you experienced discouragement in leadership (at home or in a group) because of complaining people and/or by carrying too great a burden? What happened to help you out?
2. We hear concern in our Church today about too great a burden on too few shoulders as less people are choosing vocations to be priests and religious. What effect has the shortage of religious caused? How are lay people caring for and nurturing the life of your parish in the midst of this shortage?
3. When you see that the Spirit touches those around you using people outside of priests and religious, or by groups you are not a part of, or by other denominations, can you recognize and celebrate this or do you feel a need to defend the church or your own groups? Why or why not?

Optional Exercise Have each person in the group briefly tell something of their past week or of an event anticipated in the coming week. This could be a time to share a triumph, a trial, or a need.



Second Reading

James 5: 1-6

Setting the Stage

The next reading is from the letter of James. This is written by a Jewish Christian to other Jewish Christians living outside Palestine about 40 years after the resurrection of Jesus. He writes very harsh words to people who are rich. Through these words *God our Father warns us about placing too much importance on our money, clothes and other material possessions.*

Read the second reading aloud. Reread this scripture.
What word, phrase, or idea stands out for you?

Exploring Further

1. What warning regarding riches is given in the following?
James 5:1-3
Luke 6:24-25
Proverbs 11:4, 28

2. What kind of treasure should we seek according to the following scriptures?
Romans 12: 20-21
Matthew 6:19-21
Sirach 29: 8-13 (or 11-16) See Appendix One
3. What injustice is spoken of in James 5:4?
4. Compare James 5:4, written in 40 AD, with Deuteronomy 24:14-15 from around 1300 BC. What does this say to you regarding how important this message of justice is to God and the consistency of this message?
5. What is the attitude of the rich in James 5:5-6?
6. What does Jesus say our attitude toward righteousness be in Mark 9:42-48, Sunday's gospel?
7. How does this compare to the attitude expressed in Wisdom 2:10-12?
8. Often we wonder why the wicked flourish. How is this question so eloquently asked in Jeremiah 12:1-3?
9. When will righteousness flourish according to James 5: 7-8?
10. What do you discover regarding the love of money in 1Timothy 6:10?

Reflection

1. The creation of wealth can be a virtue; the hoarding of it is not. The Church's teaching is clear. The goods of creation are destined for the entire human race.ⁱⁱ We are to be stewards of what we possess and wealth is to be shared. Is money and riches in themselves wrong? Why or why not? What is the danger of money and riches? If our heart and treasure is in seeking God, how will we use our money and riches as a result?
2. Where money is concerned it can be easy for us to justify and deceive ourselves. What might be guidelines or fruits we could use to judge if we are using our resources wisely?
3. Can you think of examples of unjust labour practices in our country? In other countries? With the development of strong unions, in what ways is it possible to have unjust employees?

Closing Prayer

The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Lord, cleanse us from hidden fault and make us a holy people. Amen.

ⁱ J.L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* Basingstoke Hampshire England (Macmillan Publishing Company, 1965) p. 145

ⁱⁱ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2452