

Readings for October 21, 2018 -- 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Can You Drink the Cup?

Jesus calls us to live and act with great humility, putting others first. He gives himself as the perfect example and role model.

Opening prayer: (or choose one from the back pages)

O God, give me the courage and strength
to be worthy of being called a Christian.

Karl Rahner, S.J.

***Opening thoughts to share:** Do you know someone who models the kind of humility that Jesus shows us? What stands out about that person?*

Reading 1 IS 53:10-11

The LORD was pleased
to crush him in infirmity.
If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
he shall see his descendants in a long life,
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.
Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness
of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,
and their guilt he shall bear.

Responsorial Psalm PS 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

R. (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us
who have put our hope in you.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Reading 2 HEB 4:14-16

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.
So let us confidently approach the throne of grace
to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

Gospel MK 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him,
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?"

They answered him, "Grant that in your glory
we may sit one at your right and the other at your left."

Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking.

Can you drink the cup that I drink
or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

They said to him, "We can."

Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink,
and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;
but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give
but is for those for whom it has been prepared."

When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John.

Jesus summoned them and said to them,

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles
lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt.

But it shall not be so among you.

Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.

For the Son of Man did not come to be served
but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Related Reflections:

Putting Others First:

The Gospel of St. Mark stresses that putting others first entails denying ourselves and taking up our cross (8:34). “Denying yourself” points to what we will have to give up in order to serve others. Often these are the things that make us feel secure in the social world: status and wealth. Although denying yourself certainly involves an interior attitude of detachment, it also means some degree of actual relinquishment. “Taking up your cross” points to all the persecution we will receive as we engage a life of putting others first. The Gospel stresses the ordeals we will have to endure in pursuing this counter-cultural life. Overall, the putting of others first seems to entail exactly what the Gospel asserts: suffering.

But a favorite saying of Gandhi, who lived life for others, was, “Renounce and enjoy.” He was more aware of the suffering of a self-centered life than the sufferings of an other-centered life ... To relinquish our demand to have everything the way we want it all the time -- is to be free to entertain what we previously would have pushed away. Our ego is a very small piece of the world. When we strenuously attach ourselves to it, we reduce our enjoyment. Detachment is the door into a larger world. *(John Shea, The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels, Year B, Liturgical Press)*

Even toward the end of their time with Jesus, James, and John are still asking Jesus how, in following him, they can become famous and sit on his right hand and his left hand. Pride can get into us in so many subtle ways. We worry too much about how other people will see us. Jesus tells us to forget about this and stay humble, open and broken. We learn how to do this by serving other people in acts of love and kindness. It is the way Jesus lived and the roadmap he has given to us.

(From a blog post - Solanus Casey Center, Detroit -- www.solanuscenter.org/blog)

Meditation

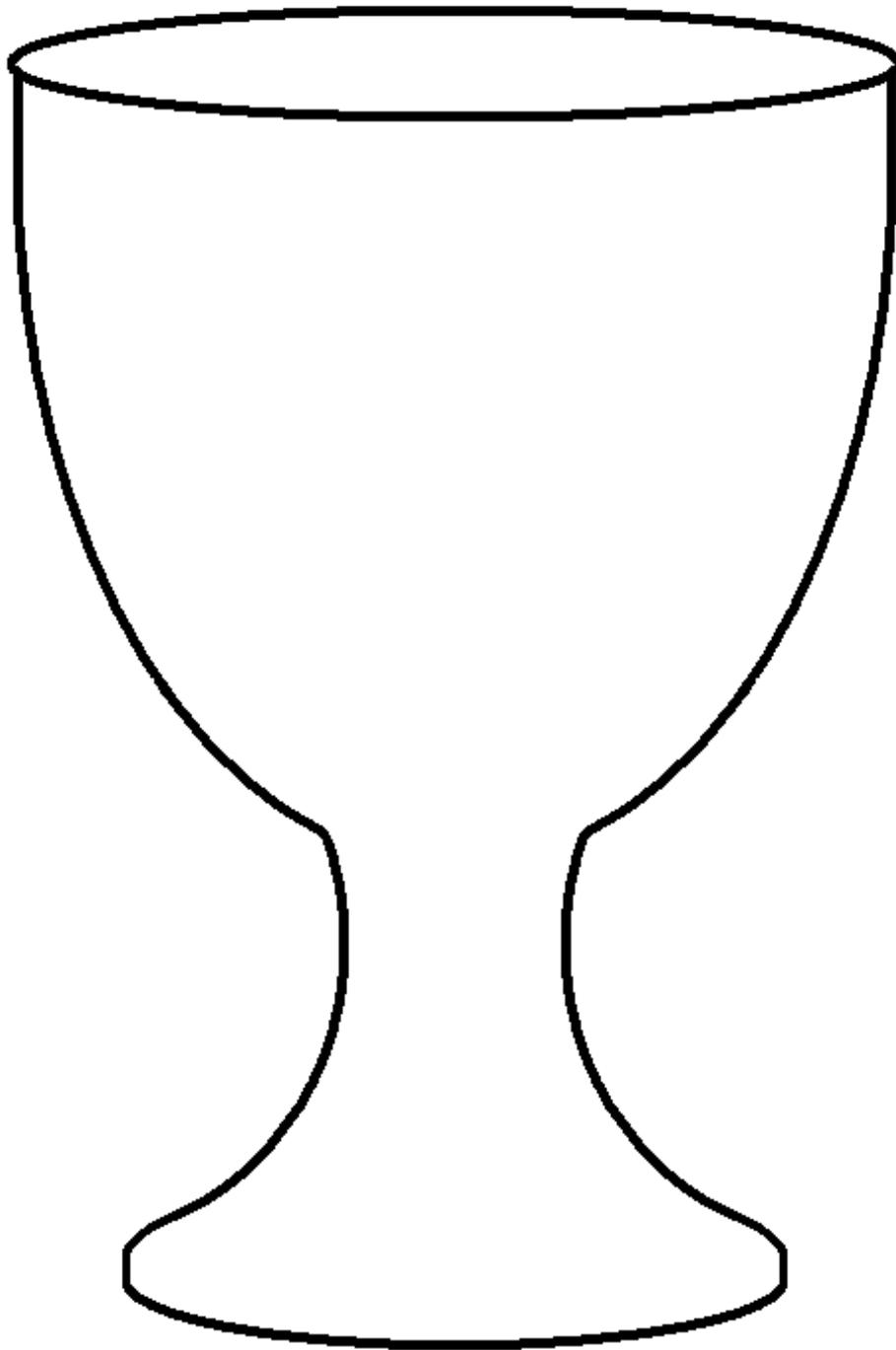
(Allow 10-15 minutes for reflection, then encourage sharing time):

Recall a time when you chose to be humble, rather than exalting yourself or letting others honor you. What was this experience like? In the drawing of the cup on the next page, list the positive and negative feelings it raised.

How would being humble be the same or different for Jesus?

Imagine what it would feel like to be God, and to allow yourself to be the “suffering servant” described by Isaiah?

(Share any thoughts with the group, if you are willing).



Possible closing prayers:

Yes, Jesus,
I want to be on your right side

or your left side,
not for any selfish reason.
I want to be on your right side or your best side,
not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition,
but I just want to be there
in love and in justice and in truth
and in commitment to others,
so we can make of this old world a new world. *Amen.*

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jesus, today as I approach you, I'm somewhat confused.
I'm torn by my desire to achieve greatness and success in the eyes of the world.
And I'd much rather drink the cup of honor and privilege
than the cup of insignificance or suffering. What do you want for me, Lord?
I ask for the grace to recognize the deep desires you've placed in my heart
and the courage to act upon them.
When you ask me, "What do you want?" give me the desire to serve others,
instead of the desire to achieve status for myself.
Form me into the person you want me to be, Jesus,
and help me to become more like you every day.

Diane Amento Owens, from a post on Ignatianspirituality.com

For the coming week:

Being a follower in everyday actions -- St. Francis de Sales taught us a great way to include God when preparing for our day. Try these suggestions this week. First, when you wake up, remind yourself of the resurrection: "Jesus has power over all sleep and death." When you get dressed, pray this line: "Cover me, Lord, with the cloak of innocence and the robe of love." Look at your calendar for the day, and see if there's anything that might be difficult. Ask God to give you the grace to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of Jesus, especially in those difficult times, or with difficult people! Finally, say the Our Father, Hail Mary, or another familiar prayer. This ritual will help you be spiritually ready to follow Jesus during the day."

(From the Living Word, Sunday Gospel Reflections 2017-2018, Liturgy Training Publications)

Suggested music:

Humble (Audrey Assad)