



Bringing Home the Word



Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2015

Spiritual Nutrition

By Janel Esker

To my surprise, late in my pregnancy I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes. This meant I needed to adhere to a strict diet. I had been eating a fairly healthful diet throughout my pregnancy, but the gestational-diabetes diet was more drastic. Suddenly I needed to measure everything I ate in cups, ounces, and tablespoons. No longer could I just grab a couple of grapes if I felt like it.

I quickly became extremely mindful of my eating—what I ate, how much of it I ate, and when I ate it. I also had to regularly extract my blood, test it with a glucose meter, and record and track the results. I did it gladly to protect my and my baby's health, but it was quite a mind shift.

The Gospel readings from John for the past several Sundays have focused

on Jesus as the true bread of life. Today's reading tells us that when we eat and drink his Body and Blood, we receive not only abundant life today, but also the promise of eternal life with God.

We eat this meal at each Mass, but how mindful are we of what it is we're eating and drinking at that moment? Unfortunately, the weekly ritual that is the Mass can become routine if we're not attentive. How often, as we process to receive the Eucharist, do we really ponder what we're receiving?

How interesting it would be if we each had a spiritual version of a glucose meter to measure our response to the Eucharist. We would quickly have the answers to two questions:

- How mindful are we of the life-giving power of the Eucharist?
- How open are we to its power? †

A Word from Pope Francis



A good educator focuses on the essentials. She doesn't get lost in details but passes on what really matters so the child or the student can find the meaning and the joy of life. It's the truth. In the Gospel, the essential thing is mercy. God sent his Son, God made himself man in order to save us, that is, in order to grant us his mercy. Jesus says this clearly, summarizing his teaching for the disciples: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Can there be a Christian who isn't merciful? No. A Christian must necessarily be merciful, because this is the center of the Gospel. And faithful to this teaching, the Church can only repeat the same thing to her children: "Be merciful," as the Father is, and as Jesus was. Mercy.

General Audience, September 10, 2014

Sunday Readings

Proverbs 9:1–6

God invites us to wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 5:15–20

"Try to understand what is the will of the Lord."

John 6:51–58

"The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."



Lord, you reveal the wisdom
of God in the hearts of all
people. Help me teach others by
example the wisdom of your love,
forgiveness, and peace.

From *Faithful Meditations for Every
Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann
McSweeney

Good Housekeeping: Aligning Our Priorities With God's

By Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR

We seek the good. But not all goods are equal, nor should they be sought in the same ways and for the same purposes. Some are more important than others. People are more important and have greater value, and thus are “higher” goods, than furniture. A starving human being’s life is of greater value than private property. Learning to correctly distinguish between goods of higher and lower value is one part of forming our conscience.

Classical moral theory distinguishes between “true” or “authentic” goods and those that are merely “instrumental.” True goods are those that have value in and of themselves. They are worth seeking and realizing for their own sake: a dignified human life, love, fidelity to our relationships, truth, beauty, integrity, justice, friendship, wisdom, knowledge of God, and happiness. Instrumental goods are those that have only relative value. They are useful only as a means for attaining true goods.

Money is an instrumental and relative good. As a medium of exchange, its only moral value lies in what we do with it. It can be sought and attained through good or evil means, and it can be used as a means for good or evil. It should only be used to pursue and attain authentic goods.

Although folk wisdom reminds us that money can’t buy happiness, many people find a kind of pseudo-happiness



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- What do I need to be more careful about?
- What wisdom and understanding do I need to seek?

in amassing and attaining money based on the fantasy of what they can do with it—even though they never seem to do anything with it except use it to make more money. In being satisfied only with possessing and accumulating more money, as if this were a good in itself, they cheat themselves of the opportunity to use their wealth for what really and authentically satisfies.

Power is also an instrumental good. The pope, the president of the United

States, and the father and mother of a family all have power and authority over others. But that authority is only an instrument that can be used to serve the authentic and “higher” common good of those who are subjected to it or to wrongfully encroach upon their freedom and dignity. When power is treated as an authentic good, then holding onto power becomes a supreme value. This can breed corruption and despotism, disfiguring the moral life of the one who has power and harming those subjected to its use.

The Christian moral call is to always seek authentic goods, making use of instrumental goods wisely and for this purpose only. Higher authentic goods should never be sacrificed or endangered in the pursuit of lower goods. We should not trade our relationships with the people who love us for the sake of wealth, power, or popularity; we should not sacrifice our personal integrity in the pursuit of comfort; we should not endanger the common good in the realization of our own personal desires. Christian moral life is a matter of having our priorities correctly ordered.

These statements presuppose the existence of a metaphysical order of morality, a hierarchy of goods that exists in the mind and will of God. Correct knowledge of this order requires contact with the mind of God. Conscience formation is aided by a spirituality that enables our personal priorities to become those of God.

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 17–22

Mon. Weekday:
Judges 2:11–19 / Matthew 19:16–22

Tue. Weekday:
Judges 6:11–24 / Matthew 19:23–30

Wed. Weekday:
Judges 9:6–15 / Matthew 20:1–16

Thu. *St. Bernard:*
Judges 11:29–39 / Matthew 22:1–14

Fri. *St. Pius X:* *Ruth 1:1, 3–6, 14–16, 22 / Matthew 22:34–40*

Sat. *The Queenship of Mary:* *Ruth 2:1–3, 8–11; 4:13–17 / Matthew 23:1–12*