

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write these words to you, we are docked in Civitavecchia, Italy, about 50 miles from Rome. Two days ago, after spending a couple of days in Barcelona, Spain, a friend and I embarked on a seven-day cruise in the Western Mediterranean. It's been a great trip, filled with visits to beautiful and historic sites, great food and entertainment, and very pleasant weather. But I think that the lasting memory of my trip will be something I saw in Barcelona.

The morning we embarked, my friend and I took a cab from the hotel where we had been staying to the cruise terminal. We had turned the corner to Las Ramblas, one of the main boulevards in the old part of Barcelona, which is filled with stores, restaurants, and people, when we stopped at a red light. I looked out the window of the cab and saw a young man, probably in his mid-20's, reach into a garbage receptacle and pull out some food that someone had discarded, which he then proceeded to eat. At that point, the traffic light changed and we drove off. The whole incident lasted less than five seconds, but it left a lasting impression on me.

I share this with you because it seems to me that the Gospel that is proclaimed to us this Sunday is meant to leave a similar kind of "lasting impression" on all of us. Knowing that I was headed to a cruise ship, where there would be an almost unlimited amount of food and drink, pampering and entertaining, I was struck, in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the activity that morning in Barcelona, to see, for a moment, a glimpse of the kind of poverty that Jesus describes in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Those who first heard Jesus speak this parable must have been accustomed to seeing hungry people in the streets all the time. But, for most of us, such experiences are not part of our daily lives. At least for me, it takes something like what I saw in Barcelona to make real for me the fact that not everyone lives with the same level of security and comfort that I live. And the question that the parable that Jesus speaks to us today poses to us is whether we will allow the good things that we have received to blind us to the suffering of our brothers and sisters.

As always, Jesus doesn't just challenge us to overcome our complacency; he also shows us the way to overcome that complacency and empowers us to do so. Just like we can't lose sight of the suffering of others, we can't lose sight of what Jesus has done and is doing for us. In coming among us in poverty and powerlessness, Jesus revealed the depth of God's love for all people, no matter their social or economic condition. In giving his life for us on the cross, Jesus freed us from the selfishness and self-absorption that divides us from each other. In rising from the dead, Jesus made it possible for us to receive a new and fuller life from him, which we did not earn and cannot hoard, but which we must accept with gratitude and gladly share with others. And in continually giving himself to us sacramentally, through his Word and Eucharist which he shares with us, Sunday after Sunday, Jesus enables us to put all of the blessings we have received from God at the service of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are in greatest need.

Our weekly encounter with the Lord Jesus in the Sunday celebration of the Holy Eucharist is an opportunity for all of us, as individuals, as married couples, as families, and as community of believers, to experience the ways in which the Lord satisfies our deepest hungers, and to have our eyes, our minds, and our hearts opened by the love of God to the hungers of those around us, whether for food, for friendship, for encouragement, or for understanding. Our communal listening to Moses and the prophets, as well as to Jesus and the apostles, should attune our ears to the voices of those who are calling out to us for help and support. Our communal offering of bread and wine, along with our financial contribution, should remind us that what we have received freely from God is meant to be shared, not hoarded. And our communal reception of the Eucharist should transform us to be the Body of Christ for our hungering world.

Peace,  
Father Leo

# ***Lectio Divina*** **for October 2, 2022** **Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time**

*We begin our prayer:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

*Collect, Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time*

## **Reading (*Lectio*)**

*Read the following Scripture two or three times.*

Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

## **Meditation (*Meditatio*)**

*After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:*

- Did this scripture passage remind you of a personal experience, story, or another scripture passage?
- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

*If practicing lectio divina as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.*

## **Prayer (*Oratio*)**

*Read the Scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.*

## **Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)**

*Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:*

What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?

*If you have faith the size of a mustard seed.... How am I nurturing the seed of my faith? What resources do I have that can strengthen my faith?*

*Come here immediately and take your place at table. To what is God calling me? Who needs to be invited to the table?*

*When you have done all you have been commanded.... How faithfully do I live the commandments? What sinful behavior do I need to bring to God for healing?*

*After a period of silent reflection and/or discussion, all recite the Lord's Prayer and the following:*

### **Closing Prayer:**

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice: "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the desert, Where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works."

*From Psalm 95*

### **Living the Word This Week**

*How can I make my life a gift for others in charity?*

Before bed each night, review your day to discern how faithfully you followed the commandments and lived your faith and to recognize when God was present.

*Excerpts from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.*

*Excerpts from the English translation of The Roman Missal © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.*