

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
Sunday, 2 July 2023

- Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflection on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 97

Reading 1 2 Kgs 4:8-11, 14-16a

One day Elisha came to Shunem,
where there was a woman of influence,
who urged him to dine with her.
Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine.
So she said to her husband,
"I know that Elisha is a holy man of God.
Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof
and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp,
so that when he comes to us he can stay there."
Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.

Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?"
His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes!
She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years."
Elisha said, "Call her."
When the woman had been called and stood at the door,
Elisha promised, "This time next year
you will be fondling a baby son."

Responsorial Psalm Ps 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19

R. (2a) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.
The promises of the LORD I will sing forever,
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your
faithfulness.
For you have said, "My kindness is established forever;"
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.
R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.
Blessed the people who know the joyful shout;
in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk.
At your name they rejoice all the day,
and through your justice they are exalted.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.
You are the splendor of their strength,
and by your favor our horn is exalted.
For to the LORD belongs our shield,
and to the Holy One of Israel, our king.
R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Reading 2 Rom 6:3-4, 8-11

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
we too might live in newness of life.

If, then, we have died with Christ,
we believe that we shall also live with him.
We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;
death no longer has power over him.
As to his death, he died to sin once and for all;
as to his life, he lives for God.
Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin
and living for God in Christ Jesus.

Alleluia 1 Pt 2:9

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation;
announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into
his wonderful light.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Mt 10:37-42

Jesus said to his apostles:

"Whoever loves father or mother
more than me is not worthy of me,
and whoever loves son or daughter
more than me is not worthy of me;
and whoever does not take up his cross
and follow after me is not worthy of me.
Whoever finds his life will lose it,
and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

"Whoever receives you receives me,

and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.
Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet
will receive a prophet's reward,
and whoever receives a righteous man
because he is a righteous man
will receive a righteous man's reward.
And whoever gives only a cup of cold water
to one of these little ones to drink
because the little one is a disciple—
amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

Next Tuesday is the Fourth of July, Independence Day in the United States of America. This Sunday, I will celebrate the 11:30 mass at Saint Leo's. At this mass, our people come mostly from villages in Jalisco and Michoacan, bringing into the church their beautiful Catholic faith.

For those of you who were born here on this side of the border, please understand that I have prepared a reflection on the Fourth of July for people that have left their family in Mexico and immigrated to the United States.

This is a homily for immigrants. Immigration, of course, is a complicated matter for us today. But I hope that what I have to say will be of benefit to those of you whose families have been in this country for many generations.

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As is often said, America is a land of immigrants and their descendants. This includes me.

My great grandparents, Moritz and Theodora Fredericks, came to Sonoma County in 1870. Moritz was afraid that Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was going to draft him into the Prussian army in an invasion of France. He may have been a draft dodger, but the real reason he and his wife left home was because they were poor and had no future in their little village on an obscure island in the cold and the fog of the North Sea.

My great grandfather, Moritz, married my great grandmother, Theodora, at Sankt Laurentz Kirche on the island of Führ, knowing that they would soon leave for Sonoma County and never to see their parents again.

They were correct. Moritz and Theodora never returned to Führ.

Moritz and Theodora made a new home for themselves in Petaluma and brought six children into the light (as we say in Spanish), including Martin, their youngest, who was my grandfather.

Those of you who are immigrants know, better than I will ever know, what it means to say goodbye to your parents and family and your village and become immigrants.

Sometimes, when I celebrate the mass or pray the rosary for your loved ones who have died in Jalisco and Michoacan, I think of Moritz and Theodora and the bittersweetness of their wedding in "the old country" (as we say in English).

But I especially think of my great grandparents when I celebrate the mass with those of you who cannot return to Mexico because of your immigration status.

Please don't cross back, even when it's your mom or your dad who has died. The desert is too dangerous. All of us, here at Saint Leo's, will gather around you and together we will offer a beautiful mass for your loved ones in Mexico who have died.

I make this promise in the name of all of us here at Saint Leo's Parish.

I thought of you who can't go back to Mexico for funerals when I read the Gospel for this morning's mass.

Jesus said to his apostles:
Whoever loves father or mother
more than me is not worthy of me,

These words must be particularly painful to hear for those who have left their parents and their village in Mexico and come here to Sonoma to be with us at Saint Leo's. I guess these words were painful for my great grandparents to hear as well.

These words are painful, but they also tell out an important truth about those of us who are immigrants.

I want you to know that leaving home, leaving mother and father and becoming an immigrant, is an act of the greatest religious significance in the eyes of your Church.

Leaving home is an act of hope that God will not abandon his immigrant people.

The immigrant is the one who must let go of mother and father, village and friends. The immigrant is the one who must trust that God is accompanying us all into the future.

And so, the Church must accompany immigrants as well. The Church must announce what the Savior says in today's Gospel: Do not be afraid. In the loss you have suffered and in your great trust in God's faithfulness, truly, you have become worthy of Christ.

Today's Gospel has much to say about why immigrants are holy and precious in the eyes of God. But today's Gospel also has much to say to America, this land of immigrants.

America must remember what Jesus went on to say in today's Gospel:

Whoever receives you receives me,
and whoever receives me,
receives the one who sent me.

America must remember that immigrants come to us bearing a gift of immeasurable value: hope in the future for our children.

And so, let us welcome those who have come to us. Let us welcome those who have come from the fields of Jalisco and Michoacan, to be sure. But now, those who have come

from Mexico must welcome and support those who bring us the gift of hope from places like Venezuela and Guatemala, from Haiti and El Salvador.

Tuesday is the 4th of July, Independence Day here in the United States.

We have much to be grateful for.

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Como suele decirse, Los Estados Unidos es una tierra de inmigrantes y sus descendientes. Esto me incluye.

Mis bisabuelos, Moritz y Theodora Fredericks llegaron al condado de Sonoma en 1870. Mi bisabuelo temía que el canciller Otto von Bismarck lo reclutara para el ejército prusiano en una invasión de Francia. Moritz pudo haber sido un evasor del reclutamiento, pero la verdadera razón por la que él y su esposa se fueron de tierra y hogar fue porque eran pobres y no tenían futuro en su pequeño pueblo en una isla oscura en el frío y la niebla del Mar del Norte.

Mi bisabuelo, Moritz, se casó con mi bisabuela, Theodora, en Sankt Laurentz Kirche en la isla de Führ, sabiendo que pronto se irían al condado de Sonoma y nunca volverían a ver a sus padres.

Estaban en lo correcto. Nunca regresaron a Führ.

Moritz y Theodora se hicieron un nuevo hogar en Petaluma y sacaron a la luz a seis niños, entre ellos Martín, el menor, que era mi abuelo.

Aquellos de ustedes que son inmigrantes saben, mejor que yo, lo que significa dejar a sus padres y familia y su pueblo y convertirse en inmigrantes.

A veces, cuando celebro la misa o rezo el rosario por tus queridos que han muerto en Jalisco o Michoacán, pienso en Moritz y Theodora y la agridulce de su boda en "the old country" (como decimos en inglés).

Pienso especialmente en mis bisabuelos cuando celebro la misa con aquellos de ustedes que no pueden regresar a México por su estatus migratorio.

Por favor, no vuelvas a cruzar la frontera, incluso cuando sea tu mamá o tu papá quien haya muerto. El desierto es demasiado peligroso. Todos nosotros, aquí en San Leo, nos reuniremos a tu alrededor y juntos ofreceremos una hermosa misa por tus seres queridos en México que han muerto.

Hago esta promesa en nombre de todos nosotros aquí en Saint Leo's.

Pensé en Uds que no pueden volver a México para los funerales cuando leí el Evangelio para la misa de esta mañana.

**El que ama a su padre o a su madre
más que a mí, no es digno de mí...
y el que no toma su cruz y me sigue, no es
digno de mí.**

Estas palabras deben ser particularmente dolorosas de escuchar para aquellos que han dejado a sus padres y su pueblo en México. Supongo que estas palabras también fueron dolorosas para mis bisabuelos.

Estas palabras son dolorosas, pero también revelan una verdad importante sobre la realidad de los inmigrantes.

Quiero que salir de casa, dejar a padre y madre y convertirse en inmigrantes, es un hecho de fe - es una acción religiosa - a los ojos de la Iglesia.

Salir de casa es un acto de esperanza de que Dios no abandonará a su pueblo inmigrante.

El inmigrante es el que debe dejar a la madre y al padre, al pueblo y los familiares. El inmigrante es el que debe confiar en que Dios nos acompaña hacia el futuro.

Entonces, la Iglesia también debe acompañar a los inmigrantes. La Iglesia debe anunciar lo que dice el Salvador en el Evangelio de hoy:

No tengas miedo.
En la pérdida que has sufrido
y en su gran confianza en la fidelidad de Dios,
en verdad, Uds. son dignos de Cristo.

El Evangelio de hoy revela mucho sobre la realidad de los inmigrantes. Los Inmigrantes son santo y precioso a los ojos de Dios. Pero el Evangelio de hoy también tiene mucho que decir a América, esta tierra de inmigrantes.

Los Estados Unidos debe recordar lo que Jesús continuó diciendo en el Evangelio de hoy:

**Quien los recibe a ustedes me recibe a mí;
y quien me recibe a mí,
recibe al que me ha enviado.**

Los Estados Unidos debe recordar que los inmigrantes vienen a nosotros con un regalo de valor incalculable: esperanza en el futuro para nuestros hijos.

Y así, demos la bienvenida a los que han venido a nosotros. Recibamos a los que han venido de Jalisco y Michoacán, por cierto. Pero ahora, los que han venido de México deben acoger y apoyar a quienes nos traen el don de la esperanza desde lugares como Venezuela y Guatemala, desde Haití y El Salvador.

El martes es el 4 de julio, Día de la Independencia aquí en los Estados Unidos.

Aquí en Estados Unidos, tenemos mucho que agradecer.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert

back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as “a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys”). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually “reading” the Bible. Rather, we are “listening” to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the reflection on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?