



Cycle B

Twenty-Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary # 131

Reading I: Isaiah 50: 5-9a

The first reading selected for today's celebration illustrates the deep and abiding **faith** of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah describes not just himself, but all those who wish to be a servant of God when he says that to be a servant, one must have deep **faith** and trust in God. Isaiah makes it clear that one who is willing to serve God may have to undergo torment and mistreatment, but that true and **faithful** servants allow God to open their ears to hear. The sinner is one who rebels, whereas one who is **faithful** does not rebel or turn away from God.

Reading 2: James 2: 14-18

Saint James continues to offer practical advice for living out one's **faith**. For Saint James, genuine **faith** in Christ goes far beyond mere intellect and is seen in one's lived life. Real **faith** is demonstrated through Christ-like behaviors and actions, such as caring for the needy. In this segment of his letter, Saint James states emphatically that a Christian cannot simply talk about care for other members of the community, or give verbal assurance to those who have physical needs. Rather, one must act in imitation of Jesus and make their **faith** active.

Gospel: Mark 8: 27-35

The question posed to the disciples in today's Gospel is one placed before all people. Jesus is asking *Who am I in your life?* It is a question that we all must answer at some point. It is not an intellectual question regarding what you know about Jesus, but instead it asks who Jesus is in your heart and what place he has in your life. Simon Peter boldly proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed one of God. After such a bold proclamation of **faith** in Jesus, we hear Jesus state that there will be suffering and death. Peter cannot understand this and rebukes this possibility. Jesus responds by saying that this is what will happen and that there will be no stopping him in fulfilling the will of the Father for the salvation of the world. Time and again, Jesus will be the words and the actions of true **faith**.



children's
story



Green Street Park

Written by Peace and Human
Development USCCB Department of
Justice

Publication: 2015, Loyola Press

ISBN-10: 0829440992

ISBN-13: 978-0829440997



character
education
activity

**To one who has faith, no
explanation is necessary. To
one without faith, no
explanation is possible.
-Saint Thomas Aquinas**

Green Street Park

This delightful children's story illustrates the importance of putting **faith** into practice. In this story, a young boy named Philip loves his neighborhood. However, there is an area of town that is known as Green Street Park that is in need of improvement and care. Philip learns about how Saint Francis of Assisi loved God's world and cared for it. His teacher, Sister Mary Clare, challenges Philip to act as Saint Francis would. By reading this story, listeners can think about how they might respond if they found themselves in Philip's shoes.

Helping Each Other be Faithful

Step One: Organize the students into groups of four and have everyone remove their shoes. Then, instruct them to form a square or the outline of a box on the floor using their shoes that is not quite large enough for all the students to stand comfortably within.

Step Two: Have the students stand inside the box that they just formed with their shoes for three minutes, but tell them that they can't help one another remain within the square; each person is on their own.

Step Three: After the three minute period, ask the students how easy or difficult the activity was.

Step Four: Then, have the students do the same exercise for three minutes, but this time, tell them that they can help each other stay within the circle or square.

Step Five: Ask the students to comment on how this exercise was different from the first time that they had to be in the space for three minutes. Then, ask the students if they could share an experience or time when they needed the support of others.

**Pray as though
everything depended
on God. Work as though
everything depended
on you.
- Saint Augustine**



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Think about some of the ordinary things that you do each day that you could reframe in terms of **faith** in action. For example, when you do a chore around the house, how is that an act of kindness that helps your family? Make a list of some of the things that you do daily that seem very ordinary, and ask yourself how you might see your actions in terms of **faith**. You could also make a list of the common and ordinary things that you might take for granted and decide to thank God for those things.

Look Feel Know Act

When each person recognizes that all of creation has been given to us by a God who loves us, we begin to realize that God is asking for a relationship with us that is based on love and **faith**. Our faith in God calls us to do something more than just say that we believe. It calls us to respond with actions that proclaim that we believe. It is important for all people of **faith** to recognize this and then act on our belief in God and God's love by living out an active **faith**. This is possible by doing good works. Just as Jesus came to serve and not to be served, we too are called to be active in our service and by doing so, we make our **faith** visible and alive.

Faith in action is shown both in the Scripture readings for today and in the story of *Green Street Park*. This book gives the listeners a chance to place themselves in a situation that would help them see how they might make their **faith** more alive and active. It is important for everyone to understand that a profession of **faith** in God goes well beyond words.



closing
tool

Pray always that your faith in God will make you want to express that faith in good works that benefit others. Pray that God will inspire you to see all that you are capable of doing, and then commit yourself to do those things as best as you are able to. Understand that God only asks us to do those things that we are capable of doing. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together

www.scu.edu/character