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Year A 31ST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION AVAILABLE ALSO

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Malachi 1:14-2:2,8-10

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 130(131)

Second Reading:

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9,13

Gospel:

Matthew 23:1-12

*'Anyone who exalts himself
will be humbled, and
anyone who humbles
himself will be exalted.'*



By James Tissot - Online Collection of Brooklyn Museum; Photo: Brooklyn Museum, 2008, 00.159.209_PS2.jpg, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10904550>

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we hear Jesus calling out the Pharisees for their hypocritical behaviour.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Have you ever been annoyed by someone who does not practice what they preach? Have you ever been that person yourself?
- What elements of Christian living are hard for you to practice? Is there one particular area the Lord is calling you to work on this week? Bring that intention to prayer this week, asking the Lord for the wisdom and grace to choose one thing to work on this week to make your prayer life and everyday life more consistent. You might find this YouTube reflection from Fr Patrick Cahill helpful: [Choose One Thing](#)

Talk

In today's readings we hear Jesus explain how important it is to practice what we preach.

- Who is it you look up to in life? Whose example inspires you? What is it about them that you like?
- Do you find it easy to practice what you preach at home or in school? Can anyone think of examples where it can be difficult?
- Jesus shows us by His life and words what it means to be a good leader: a good leader serves others rather than wanting to be served. Look for opportunities this week to serve others in hidden ways, so that you don't look for praise!

Family Challenge!

This week, make a special effort to choose good and kind ways to serve other people. Look for hidden ways especially you can bring joy to someone else: maybe you could tidy up for them, or leave a nice note on their pillow, or a little gift, or pray for them, or offer them encouragement... the possibilities are endless!

HUMILITY

Today's Gospel continues to elaborate on the tension between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. Our Lectionary sequence at this point, however, is not quite a continuous reading of Matthew. In between last week's reading from Matthew and this week's, we find Jesus' question to the Pharisees about the Messiah being "David's son." Having concluded a series of dialogues with the Pharisees and other religious leaders, Jesus now directs his words to the crowds, warning them not to follow the example of the scribes and Pharisees.

The scribes and Pharisees were teachers of the Mosaic Law. They were entrusted with its interpretation and, thus, were influential in determining Jewish practice. In order to appreciate the conflict that is evident in this passage, we must understand that Jesus was basing his teachings on the same laws and traditions available to the Pharisees. Both were interpreting the Law of Moses in order to better adapt it to contemporary Jewish life. The differences between their teachings, therefore, are often highlighted and amplified by Matthew.

This part of Matthew's Gospel reflects aspects of the conflict between his Christian community and Pharisaic Judaism. Matthew's Church is thought to have included many Jewish Christians who may not have believed that a break with the synagogue was necessary to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus tells the crowd that it is correct to do and observe what the scribes and Pharisees teach; it is their example that is to be avoided, namely, their love of being honored and exalted. Hence, the Gospel reflects the tension of an active internal debate within the early Church.

Jesus references two aspects of Jewish spiritual life prescribed by the Law of Moses. Phylacteries are small boxes which contain Scripture verses that are placed on the left forearm and forehead. Tassels refer to the fringes worn on the corners of a person's garments; the tassels help to remind those who wear them to keep the commandments.

The warning Jesus gives against seeking places of honor in the community was directed as much toward the Christian community as the named Jewish leaders. Indeed, it is a warning that resonates with us today. Christian leadership is a call to service for the glory of God; those who would be leaders among us must, like Jesus, be servants of all.

taken from **Loyola Press Sunday Connection**

CHECK IT OUT: AWAKEN MY HEART - EMILY WILSON



52 Weeks of Giving Thanks and Loving Abundantly: A Yearly Devotional for Women. Do you feel as if you are running on empty? Have you fallen asleep to the glory of God and his love being revealed to you each day? These fifty-two reflections will help you cultivate a deeper prayer life, find freedom from the frenzy of tasks and the noise of the culture, and discover the lasting joy that can only blossom in a heart awakened to the beauty of God's quiet, loving presence.

Available from Amazon.co.uk



BE AN INFLUENCER

Do you want to change the world? Do you want to make a difference? You can be a leader, an influencer, you can effect change, starting with the people in your life. In this Gospel Passage, Jesus speaks out strongly about the Pharisees who clearly were not practicing what they preach. He sets out for us the standard of leadership: to be humble. That's not always what we think of when it comes to leadership skills is it? We hear more about confidence, charisma, dynamic speaking skills, vision.... but Jesus Himself showed us through the way He lived and died that humble service is what is more effective. Being humble isn't denying your gifts and talents - it's recognising where they come from and using them to give glory to God. Look at the saints - that's just what they did, and now their names are written in heaven forever, as inspiration for us. Jesus is very clear with His listeners, our actions must be coherent with our words. Is that a challenge for you too? Jesus calls us to humility, service and love. He didn't say it would be easy, but all things are possible through His grace. Maybe humility is something we all need to work on.

This week:

this week, reflect on the influence you have on others in their lives. Is there one aspect of your life you can choose to focus on, to elevate, so that if someone was to model their life on yours, it would help them become the best version of themselves, to become a great saint? each evening reflect back on how the day went and ask the Lord to help you in the days ahead.



Fr Mike: Influencing the World

The Litany of Humility (Thomas Muglia)

To the Heights Youth Resource also available



Family Prayer

Father, show us how to serve you through serving others, putting the needs of others before our own, joyfully and willingly. Amen

EVENTS

The Chosen TV Series: Beginning Tues 10th Oct (8pm) on zoom or Wed 11th Oct (2.30pm) in person in St John's Pastoral Centre, Waterford. For more info contact Sr. Kathryn 087 404 2784 or waterford@ascj.us.org

An Evening with The Chosen: Monday 6th November, Glór na Mara Primary School, Convent Road, Tramore - beginning with tea / coffee at 7.15pm. Also on 4th December.

Encounter for Young Adults (18-35): Fri 10th November, 8pm in St John's Church, Parnell Street, Waterford. Talk, Music, Prayer - followed by pizza. For more info: www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry

St Joseph's Men's Prayer Group: Wednesday Evening in St. Saviour's Church, Bridge Street, Waterford: 7pm Exposition, Mens Adoration, Benediction, Faith 7:45pm Formation & Group Sharing, ending with Tea and Biscuits

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- To the Heights Youth Newsletter (youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie) WEEKLY
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