

August 25, 2024

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time



# AWAKEN

Becoming Disciples of the Word

## Sunday's

### READINGS

Joshua 24:1–2a, 15–17, 18b  
Ephesians 5:21–32  
John 6:60–69

Scan the code to read today's readings. ➔



## Opening PRAYER

*Make me wise, O Lord. Do not let me waste my time chasing what is shallow and cannot satisfy the hunger that you have planted deep within me. Amen.*



## Thoughts for REFLECTION

When did you become aware that despite your efforts you were still not satisfied?

Look at your calendar and how you spend your time reflects your priorities. Does your time reflect the priority of discipleship?

*Awaken is written and edited by Jo Ann Paradise, D.Min.*



## What You NEED to KNOW

### Scripture Background

#### Joshua 24:1–2a, 15–17, 18b

The story of Joshua is often overlooked when we recount the patriarchs of the Old Testament. Joshua was appointed by God, through Moses, to lead the Israelites as they take the final steps into the promised land. He would lead them in many battles to reclaim the land. Joshua gathered the people to renew their commitment to God through the Covenant. He divided the land among the twelve tribes that descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. In today's passage, Joshua gathers the people once again, shortly before his death. He declares before them that despite the temptations to worship other gods, he and his household will serve the Lord. His witness moves others to commit to their relationship with Yahweh.

#### Ephesians 5:21–32

If we hear today's reading from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, without placing it in its historical and social setting, we might shake our heads and wonder, "How can this be inspired writing?" Some people may misinterpret the meaning of God's Word and use this passage to "prove" that God created men to dominate women. Saint Paul was not a psychic who could foresee the future. In

counseling the Ephesians, he used an image of family life that was the norm for that time. Paul is not providing marriage instruction. He is using the image of marriage to shed light on Christ's relationship to the Church. He uses the most intimate of human relationships to express the depth of love that Christ has for his Body, the community of disciples. Paul is an excellent teacher. He uses an experience that the Ephesians can relate to and one that is still relevant in our day.

#### John 6:60–69

Today, we come to the end of Jesus' discourse. Attention shifts to the disciples' response. The disciples, referring to Jesus' previous statement, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:51), respond, "This saying is hard. Who can accept it?" (v. 60). That question rings through two millennia. While some walk away, Peter gives the response of those who have encountered the Father in the actions and words of Jesus, "Master to whom shall we go?" (v. 68). Because we know that at the end of Jesus' life the Apostles will betray him, we take comfort. Their journey of faith continues to be challenged and their response is not always faithful.





## Points to Ponder

### A Self-Giving Love

When we explore the meaning of the passage from Ephesians today, we may be led to reflect on our understanding of marriage. To understand the relationship between Christ and the Church, we must first appreciate what God intended for humanity when he created marriage and family. Because God created with hearts that long for relationship, he designed humanity to have the capacity for intimacy. Intimacy is the journey of self-disclosure and self-offering. It is the gradual process of trusting another with parts of yourself. Observing how the other receives what you have given encourages you to offer more or to not go further. With a spouse or a close friend, you may surrender all that you are. That is the level of intimacy Paul is speaking about when he points to Jesus and the Church. Christ has totally revealed the nature of God and has offered his whole self in love. It is our privilege and responsibility to honor and receive this most incredible gift.

- How do you make yourself available to receive the gift of God's self?
- What are the ways you offer yourself to God?



The Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's Passover.

—Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1362

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit the Pflaum Eucharist resources page.



## and CHURCH TEACHING

Connecting GOSPEL

## How Open Are We to Love?

The mission of the Church is to facilitate an intimate relationship between humanity and Jesus Christ. You might imagine each of us wearing a T-shirt that says, "Let me introduce you to the love of my life!" We cannot speak those words from our heart unless, of course, we have intentionally entered into an intimate relationship with Christ. The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* tells us, "God's sharing [of his inner life] was an act of friendship for us, revealing himself as one reveals his or her heart

to a friend. Love does such things. God desires to have an intimate relationship with all people. The process of Revelation, which took centuries to unfold, reached its magnificent fulfillment in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (p. 13), *The Body of Christ, the Church*, is loved to that depth. May we be responsive to the trust God has placed in us.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 443–477 or go to Booklet 4, Session 2 in *Growing Faith*.



## Closing PRAYER

*Jesus, despite our brokenness you continue to trust us with your very self. Send your Spirit upon your Church that we may act as your beloved community. Amen.*

## FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



### Question of the Week

How might Jesus have felt when he asked the Apostles if they would leave too?



### Family Prayer

Jesus, help us to believe in you even when we do not understand what you have planned for us. Amen.