

Sunday's

READINGS

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–8
James 1:17–18, 21b–22, 27
Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

Scan the code to read
today's readings. →

Opening
PRAYER

*Lord, help me to find moments
in my daily routines that
can become reminders of your
presence. Amen.*

Thoughts for
REFLECTION

What can help you to become more aware that your thoughts lead to actions?

Virtue and vice are both habitual patterns. Name a virtue that was once a difficult choice for you that has now become a natural response because of your consistent choice.

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What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–8

Why are the Israelites called the chosen people? This contradicts the revelation of Jesus that God has no favorites. This term may come from one of the meanings of the word *chosen*. When we say someone was chosen, it often has the connotation of being special. “I was chosen to lead the line to recess!” Moses makes clear what God means when he calls the Israelites his chosen people. The Israelites have been chosen by God to live in right relationship with him through the Law. Through the lived practice of their faith, they will bring other peoples, those who believe in other gods, to know Yahweh as the one true God. They are chosen for a mission—a mission of evangelization. “For what nation is there that has gods so close to it as the LORD, our God...” (v. 7).

James 1:17–18, 21b–22, 27

James shares three thoughts to ground his conclusion that all that is good is a gift from God. God has willed reconciliation with the world through his Son, Jesus. This makes the first disciples the “first fruits” of the new age. Because of this, the Word (the Good News of salvation) has taken root in their hearts. Now, a drum roll, please!

James proclaims, “Be doers of the word and not just hearers only” (v. 22). Faith and action are partners in the dance of discipleship. We cannot simply pray for the orphans and widows. Our prayers must lead us to action. Our action calls for both charity (generous giving) and work toward eliminating systems that bring about the suffering of the oppressed.

Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

Remember being called to the table for dinner with the phrase “Go wash your hands”? This cleansing practice was part of the ritual of Jewish households, commanded in the Law of Moses. Its meaning however, was more than hygiene. The hand washing signaled that something sacred was about to happen. The prayer recited during the ritual was a reminder that living in right relationship with God requires living his Law. This may help us understand why the Pharisees become so upset when they observe some of Jesus’ disciples preparing to eat without purifying themselves. Jesus’ responds, “You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition” (v. 8). Jesus is reminding the Pharisees that they have separated the ritual from its meaning.





Points to Ponder

Creed, Code, and Cult

Today we reflect upon the relationship between faith and religion. While both speak to our spiritual lives, they are distinct. There are people who refer to faith in a quantitative way. We are misled to believe that God gives us something that is measured. The truth is that God with great love invites us into relationship. He creates us with the capacity to recognize and the freedom to respond to his invitation. We decide whether or not to grow in that relationship. Faith, like all relationships, is developed over time. Religion is a communal expression of faith. All religions have the components of creed, code, and cult. A creed expresses a common set of beliefs shared in a common theological language. Based on creed, the community develops a code, a set of behaviors that express the values of their beliefs. Finally, cult is the common experience of ritual and worship. The word *cult* has only recently developed a negative meaning.

- How would you explain the statement “Religion should always be in service of faith”?
- As you reflect upon your own development in faith, share how one aspect of your relationship with God has grown.



The Eucharist is the living heart of each of our parishes and indeed of the Church herself. Without the Eucharist, the Church simply does not exist.

—Saint John Paul II

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



and CHURCH TEACHING

Connecting GOSPEL

God’s Plan for Salvation

It is important to know the Church’s teaching about her own existence. “The Church has her origin in the Holy Trinity.... In his plan for the salvation of humanity, God the Father willed the existence of the Church. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, established a community of disciples and died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, works within the Church to keep her members faithful to the Gospel” (*United States Catholic Catechism for*

Adults, p. 129). The Holy Spirit continually helps us to understand the fullness of God’s revelation. We also hear the Church assert, “Those who through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try in their own actions to do his will...those too may achieve eternal salvation.” (*Lumen gentium*, no. 16)

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 422–442 or go to Booklet 4, Session 1 in Growing Faith.



Closing PRAYER

Holy Spirit, in you our Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Help me to grow in appreciation of your presence and guidance in our Church. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

How do you honor Jesus with your words and actions?



Family Prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to be true in our faith and love for you. Let our words and our actions reflect that love. Amen.