

**TWENTY-FOURTH  
SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR B**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Mighty God,  
we want to be with you  
and share your life.  
Fill us with your courage  
so that we do not  
just talk about this  
but really try to carry it out.  
Let us be  
true followers of Jesus,  
giving up everything  
that gets in the way  
of loving you,  
and so come to our home  
with you and live with you  
forever and ever.

**FOCUS OF THE READINGS:**

Our focus today is the call to live concretely our faith in Christ. It is of little use to say we believe in Christ but not in his cross, as Peter seems to have done in today's Gospel reading. Acceptance of Christ means acceptance of his cross and also of our own cross in union with him. To reject the reality of suffering is to reject the reality of the crucified Christ.

In our first reading, James tells us that it is false to say we believe in Christ if we do not live as Christ lived, namely, for others. To reject the reality of service in the Christian life, is to reject the reality of Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. Further, James calls us to live our belief that Christ died for all and therefore we are all brothers and sisters of the same family. To deny this is to deny Christ.

Christ's death on the cross is the culmination of his life for others. For us, too, the cross and service must go together.

**FIRST READING: James 2:8, 14-17**

*This is a reading  
from a letter written by James.*

My brothers and sisters,

The most important commandment is:

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

If you really keep this commandment  
you are doing what God wants you to do.  
But what good is it to say we believe  
if we don't do good things for other people?  
That isn't real faith, is it?

For example, if a brother or a sister  
doesn't have clothes or enough food to eat,  
it's not enough just to say,

“Good luck to you!

I hope you are warm enough  
and I hope you find enough food to eat.”

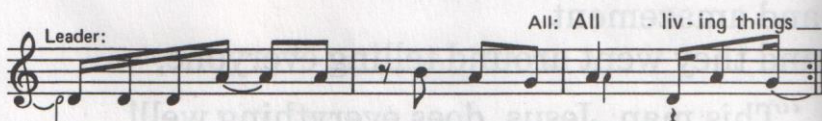
If you don't help your brother or sister  
find food or clothes, what good are your words?  
It's the same way with our faith.

If we don't do good things for others,  
our faith isn't real faith at all. It's dead.  
I show what I believe by the good things I do.

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**RESPONSE: Psalm 104**

RESPONSE:



1. When we are hun - gry you give us food.
2. Each day you give — us all that we need.
3. Your hand is o - pen with gifts for all.
4. I will sing prais - es and bless your name.

\*Round during final response only



## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



1. "If you would be my dis-ci-ples, ac-cept the cross and fol-low me."
2. Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, "Ac-cept the cross and fol-low me."

## GOSPEL: Mark 8:27-35

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.*

Jesus and his disciples were going to the towns around Caesarea Philippi.

On the way, Jesus asked them,

"Who do other people think I am?"

They told him,

"Some think you are John the Baptist or one of the prophets."

Then Jesus said,

"Who do you think I am?"

Peter said,

"You are the Messiah, the Christ."

Jesus told his disciples not to tell that to anyone.

Then Jesus began to teach his disciples that he was going to suffer very much.

He told them that he was going to be killed but that he would rise again after three days.

He said all of this very clearly so that the disciples would know what was going to happen.

Peter took Jesus away from the group and told him not to say those things.

Jesus looked at the disciples and then he scolded Peter, and said,

"Go away from me!

You are talking like Satan.

You want things to be just as human beings want them.

You don't care what God wants!"

Then Jesus spoke to all the disciples and the people who were there with them. He said,

"Those who want to be my disciples will not be able to have everything the way they want it.

They will have to give us some things.

My disciples must accept the cross and follow me.

Those who live this way because of me and because of the Good News, will live with me forever."

*This is the Good News of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Both of these readings are important in our on-going formation as Christians and they are important in the formation of children as well. But we must be cautious in reflecting on them with small children.

"Accepting one's cross" as well as the exhortation in James must be applied in suitable language and concrete examples appropriate to the age of the children. We want to avoid burdening them with expectations beyond their understanding or capacity to fulfill.

*After the first reading*, ask the children to explain in their own words what James is teaching us in this passage. Ask them to give other examples of this. You will know by these examples if they have understood the reading and can apply it to their own lives. Help them see that God wants to help the poor, the hungry, the blind and all those in need, and often does that by using our hands, feet, and so forth. We help God do this because we believe.

*After the Gospel*, ask the children what Jesus said about those who want to be his disciples. (You may have to read the last paragraph again.)

- What does Jesus mean when he says that his disciples "may not have everything the way they want it"?
- How can this help others?
- What does Jesus mean when he says "accept the cross and follow me"?

Help the children understand that to accept the cross means to live as Jesus lived.

Jesus promises that those who do this will live forever.