

**Sunday, August 11, 2019**

**19th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion**

**Mass Readings:**

**1st Reading:** Wisdom 18:6-9

**Responsorial:** Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-22

**2nd Reading:** Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

**Gospel:** Luke 12:32-48

**Experiencing the Presence of the Lord in Our Day-to-Day Lives**

*Be . . . ready. (Luke 12:36)*

Are you ready?

The servants in today's Gospel are. Lamps lit, loins girt, waiting for their master's knock at the door. They know he will come sooner or later, so they don't sit around. They make preparations, stay awake, and keep doing what they know they need to do to prepare.

What a good analogy for our life of faith! Faith isn't just believing something abstract. It's about acting on what you believe. It's about taking the necessary steps that flow from your belief. It's a theme that's repeated in all of today's readings: being ready, looking forward with vigilance, waiting with faith. Faith is anything but passive.

The Israelites in the first reading listened to God's direction and prepared the Passover as they waited for their deliverance. Abraham, in the second reading, left his homeland and struck out for the Promised Land, though he didn't even know where it was! They held onto their hope that God would be true to his promises.

You can do that too. You know that you have a loving Father, so you can trust that your active waiting will not be in vain. You probably already have a sense about what you could do—so do it!

As you're practicing this active waiting, remember that you're not alone. You're being supported by all the saints and holy people who have eagerly waited for God as well. You have the Holy Spirit living in you to remind you that God is not trying to catch you off guard; he's eager to celebrate with you and bless you.

If you need encouragement, look at the surprising way the master blesses his servants in the Gospel: he puts on an apron and serves them. He even goes so far as to put his faithful servant in charge of all his property. Like this master, God our Father wants to share his blessings with all his servants. He is pleased to give them—and us—the kingdom.

*"Lord, I believe you are good and faithful to your promises. Help me to be ready for you."*

(Many thanks to ***The Word Among Us*** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

## Sunday, August 11, 2019

### Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion:

1. In the first reading, we hear these words: *The night of the passover was known beforehand to our fathers, that, with sure knowledge of the oaths in which they put their faith, they might have courage. Your people awaited the salvation of the just and the destruction of their foes. For when you punished our adversaries, in this you glorified us whom you had summoned. For in secret the holy children of the good were offering sacrifice and putting into effect with one accord the divine institution.*
  - How have these words of the first reading been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ?
  - What about you? How patient are you in waiting for (or on) the Lord? What are the circumstances when you aren't?
  - What words of this reading do you think are yet to be fulfilled?
2. The responsorial psalm begins with these words: *Exult, you just, in the LORD; praise from the upright is fitting. Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.* It continues with these words: *See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine. Our soul waits for the LORD, who is our help and our shield. May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.*
  - The responsorial psalm ends with these words: *May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.* How does the responsorial psalm speak of the hope God's people have in the Lord?
  - How can an incorrect view of the nature and character of God, and his love towards us, contribute to a lack of hope?
  - Were there any circumstances in your life where you despaired of hope? What was the final outcome?
3. The second reading opens with this profound definition of faith: *Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.* It goes on to describe how Abraham confidently placed his trust in God, and as a result: *there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.* The reading ends with these words: *By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.*
  - Abraham is called "our father in Faith" in the Eucharistic prayer at mass. What do you think are some of the reasons Abraham is often used as an example of someone with great faith?
  - In what way is the story of Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice a foreshadowing of God offering up his son as a sacrifice for our sins?
  - What are some times in your life when you stepped out in faith, trusting God that he would protect and sustain you?
4. The Gospel begins with these words: *Jesus said to his disciples: Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.* It continues with these words: *Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival... Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.*
  - What do the beginning words of the Gospel reading mean to you?
  - How would you summarize the message in the other words of the reading?
  - How can you open yourself more to receive all that your Heavenly Father wants to give you?
  - What steps can you take to give to others what the Lord has given you, e.g., his love and mercy and forgiveness?
5. The meditation begins with these words: "Are you ready? The servants in today's Gospel are. Lamps lit, loins girt, waiting for their master's knock at the door. They know he will come sooner or later, so they don't sit around. They make preparations, stay awake, and keep doing what they know they need to do to prepare. What a good analogy for our life of faith! Faith isn't just believing something abstract. It's about acting on what you believe. It's about taking the necessary steps that flow from your belief... Faith is anything but passive." It ends with these words: "Like this master, God our Father wants to share his blessings with all his servants. He is pleased to give them—and us—the kingdom."
  - How would you answer the question posed in the meditation regarding the return of Jesus: "Are you ready?"
  - What do these words from the meditation mean to you? "Faith isn't just believing something abstract. It's about acting on what you believe. It's about taking the necessary steps that flow from your belief."
  - Do you believe that "God our Father wants to share his blessings with all his servants" and that "He is pleased to give them—and us—the kingdom"? Why or why not?

**Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord for his faithfulness and ask him for the grace to trust in his great love and in his promises to you. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as a starting point.**

***"Lord, I believe you are good and faithful to your promises. Help me to be ready for you."***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization ([www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal ([www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of *The Word Among Us* ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry]