

Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.

- Mark 9

Seventh Week of Ordinary Time: May 18-24, 2008

The Seventh Week of Ordinary Time

On Sunday, the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity** offers us a chance to reflect on the personal richness of our faith. We read from the **Book of Exodus** of Moses meeting his Lord face to face. In **John's Gospel** the three lines of the Gospel poetically summarize our faith. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

The first reading during the week is from the **Book of James**. It continues to offer instruction for living our lives in Christ. "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

In **Mark's Gospel** this week we have wonderful stories. Jesus drives a demon out of a man and says that it took faith and prayer. As they continue on the road to Jerusalem, he tells them of his passion, death and resurrection, but they fail to see the meaning for them. They are arguing over who is the greatest. He tells them again what it means to be a disciple: to welcome little ones. In a series of sayings Jesus warns his disciples about scandalizing little ones, and calls them to remove any obstacle to their following him. The Pharisees ask him about divorce, to test him and turn the people from him. Jesus clearly responds about the sacredness of marriage. Because the disciples were discouraging people from bringing children to Jesus, Jesus embraces and blesses the children.

Sunday is the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**. This week is a great preparation for our journey with Jesus more deeply into the mystery of self-giving love. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a great week to pray for simplicity, and all the graces that flow from this gift. Now simplicity doesn't mean being simple minded or naive. It means being like the little children Jesus called us to imitate and the little children he embraced.

It is easy to take few moments each morning this week to ask for the graces that we need to look into our busy calendars, and into our very full hearts, and find the areas that need greater simplicity. Of course, part of that prayer comes out of a desire to be less complicated, to be less stressed by conflict and to not be pulled in too many directions. Another level of that prayer is that we might be more trusting, more vulnerable and more dependent upon God. This is to ask for that great grace of living a life that comes together - with the various parts in harmony with each other, i.e., the me that goes to church on Sunday is the same me that interacts with my family and the me that goes to work each day.

Each of us will find ways to ask for these graces according to our own circumstances. Some of us may be able to set time aside every day to pray. But, even those of us who can't seem to find that time can choose to focus our consciousness enough to gather our interior movements together in ongoing brief, but very meaningful, conversations with our Lord. If our days can begin with naming the desire that will give shape to our thoughts and desires throughout the day, then that discipline will pay off richly in our ability to re-connect to that desire when we are in the midst of doing almost anything. It starts to become easy to recall what we asked the Lord for in just 30 or 40 seconds in the morning. While walking somewhere or while doing almost anything else that used to just be filled with worry or anxiety or "day dreaming," we can now talk with our Lord about this event or that conflict, this person or that habit of mine. Each brief, "background" encounter with our Lord will help us repeat our desire to be made more simple. "Whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."

the life of the world."