

*The Spirit of the Holy One
is upon me
and has appointed me
to bring good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
recovery of sight to the blind
and release to prisoners;
to announce a year of
God's favor.*

Luke 4.18-19

SUNDAY

by Sunday

GUIDE

2009 - 2010

One day Jesus went to sabbath services in his hometown, Nazareth. They asked him to be the lector. He opened the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read the passage above. Then he began his homily on the text by saying: "Today these words have been fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus claims the words of the prophet as his mission.

Jesus' purpose is also the purpose of *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY*—to fulfill in our world the scriptures we hear each Sunday. The Spirit anoints us in baptism and confirmation to be prophets, to interpret the word for our time and live it in our world.

Faith Sharing: Conversation That Transforms Us

Each issue of *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* engages adults in the work of interpreting the gospel for their individual lives and for the upbuilding of the human community. In its four pages, *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* begins a conversation among adults that can only be completed as we act lovingly and justly where each of us lives.

SUNDAY BY SUNDAY asks adults to become companions on a faith journey together, to nourish each other through faith sharing, scripture reflection, and prayer. In the give and take of conversation, we witness how God acts in our lives, we remember Jesus' story, and we glimpse ways to transform ourselves, our homes, our workplaces, our parishes, and our human future together.

The Lectionary

SUNDAY BY SUNDAY reflects on scripture by following the lectionary, the Church's book of scripture readings organized for reading aloud at worship. The Sunday lectionary selects from the 72 books of the bible the scripture passages for the Sundays of the liturgical year.

This year we read from Mark's gospel in the autumn and begin Luke's gospel in Advent. The first readings, usually from the Old Testament, are chosen to fit in with the gospel theme. *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* often uses a portion of the second reading for opening or closing prayer.

Welcome to *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY*, published by the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Holy Spirit is with you as you open your hearts to Jesus' story.

When we gather to share our faith and study the scriptures, we are gathering together as church. Jesus has promised to be with us whenever two or more gather in his name. In using *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* to break open God's word, we experience church in its essentials.

October 12, 2008, 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Vol. 18, No. 2

SUNDAY by Sunday

by Joan Mitchell, CSJ

Place breads from various ethnic or cultural groups at the center of your group. For example, rice cakes, challah, corn bread, tortillas. Pray together.

LEADER: You, shepherd us. Creator God. We lack nothing. **All:** You bring us to green pastures and lead us to restful waters where you restore our spirits.

LEADER: You set a table before us in the sight of our foes. Our cups overflow. **All:** Surely your goodness and kindness will follow us all the days of our lives. Amen.

Meals. Anyone who has three meals a day and lives to be 70 eats nearly 100,000 of them. So basic is eating to human life that we eat to celebrate, to remember, to make up, to reunite, to get acquainted, to bond, to talk, to marry, to bury, to grieve, and to initiate.

Social analysts say many busy families today graze; they eat on the move, like animals, rather than share meals. Yet, extended families grill and picnic in backyards and city parks. Friends snack and talk over cookies or coffees. Eating is not only a social but a spiritual necessity. Relationships nourish one

The meal is an ancient and persistent symbol of communion and fellowship with God and other people. A sumptuous meal for all the people of Earth is one of the Old Testament's visions of peace and salvation in Sunday's first reading. Food is one of the basic human rights according to John XXIII in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and the Second Vatican Council's *Church in the Modern World* (#25).

World Food Day is October 16. World farmers produce enough food for Earth's more than six billion people, but nearly one billion people struggle to survive on less than a \$1 a day with little access to Earth's abundance.

When have you eaten with people who are poor? How did the experience affect you?

1 Pray together to begin.

2 Reflect on your own life experience.

3 Proclaim the Sunday Gospel. Page 2.

4 Dialog with the Gospel. Read pages 2 and 3.

GOSPEL

Come to the wedding feast.

NARRATOR: Jesus again addressed the chief priests and elders who challenged his authority.

JESUS: The kingdom of God may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to summon the invited guests to the wedding, but they refused to come. He sent servants a second time.

KING: Tell those who have been invited, "See, I have my dinner prepared! I have killed my bullocks and combed cattle; everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

JESUS: The invited guests ignored the king's invitation

and went their way—one to his farm and another to his business. The rest laid hold of the king's servants, insulted them, and killed them. At this the king grew furious and sent his army to destroy those murderers and burn their city. Then he said to his servants: **KING:** The banquet is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.

JESUS: The servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. This filled the wedding hall with banqueters. *Matthew 22:1-10*



Who will attend the messianic banquet?

The wedding feast is the third of the three parables Jesus uses in Matthew's narrative to call the chief priests and elders to judgment. The parable of the two sons asks them whether they are sowers or doers of God's commands. The parable of the tenants asks them whether they are murderous or fruitful tenants of God's vineyard.

One important theme Matthew carries over from the parable of the tenants is the father/son relationship. We Christians quickly and rightly identify the son in both parables with Jesus. In Israel's traditions, son is a code word for messiah. Israel understood its king as God's son. In Psalm 2 God says of the king on the day of his enthronement in Zion, "You are my son; today I have begotten

you." The word *messiah* means the *anointed one or king*.

The meal Jesus describes in Sunday's parable is no ordinary dinner but a wedding feast. The royal wedding setting is unique to Matthew's telling of this parable. Matthew adds other details to the parable that give the story double meanings. In this way he creates an allegory in which characters and actions in the parable stand for people and events at the time he wrote in the A.D. 80s.

The king is God. The king's son is Jesus, the bridegroom, Israel's messiah, who has come to his people.

The first servants are the prophets of Israel. In Sunday's first reading, the lectionary reads from one such prophet, Isaiah's vision of a feast God will set for all nations in Jerusalem.

The first guests are Jews who do not recognize Jesus as the messiah. In Israel's history, political leaders sought to kill the prophets Elijah and Jeremiah and did kill John the Baptist and Jesus.

The wedding feast celebrates a union that is not between just any man and woman but between the king's son and the people of Israel.

The king's troops are the Roman soldiers, who put down a Jewish rebellion in A.D. 70. In history, the 10th Legion destroyed and burned the temple in Jerusalem, ending



temple worship. Matthew's allegory interprets the temple's destruction as punishment of those who rejected Jesus.

The second servants, the ones who find guests on the highways and byways, are the Christian missionaries who preached the good news of Jesus' resurrection to new life to people from many nations.

The second guests are those from the many nations around the Mediterranean Sea who believe in Jesus and come to the messianic banquet.

What meal stands out in your experience as an experience of holy communion?

Christians today don't catch on readily to Matthew's allegory. For first-century Jews, both Christian Jews and rabbinic Jews, the Jewish-Roman war that destroyed the temple was a watershed event. Until then, rabbinic Jews who studied Torah in synagogues and Christian Jews who broke bread

in Jesus' name in house churches came together for temple feasts. With the temple gone, differences between the two groups sharpened. The community for whom Matthew writes lives in the midst of this conflict.

Over the centuries Christians have wrongly seen in Matthew's allegory reason to persecute Jewish people. Matthew's allegory interprets conflicts in his time. It can also lock the meaning in the first century if we don't peel away the allegory. The parable is first and foremost the story of a man with a great feast who wants guests to share it.

When have you prepared food for guests who left you with abundant leftovers? What did you do?

For Matthew, the story of God's love for humankind does not end with the end of temple worship. For him, Jesus the messiah hosts the wedding banquet in his name to share. He sees in the preaching of the early Christian missionaries a new wave of God's servants gathering guests from among the nations for God's banquet.

God's love reaches beyond Israel's boundaries to the Gentiles.

For Christians, Jesus' meal, our eucharist, is the messianic banquet, a feast for all nations. Jesus opens new possibilities for gathering people into union

with God. He shows us the wholeness and salvation flow from loving enemies, sharing what one has, making peace, showing mercy.

How is your Sunday parish eucharist like the messianic feast for all nations?

In what intentional ways do you welcome the people of earth to your parish table?

How do you help provide hungry people in your area?

Isaiah 24:27 forms a psalm that commentators call the "Isaiah Apocalypse." Sunday's first reading comes from these visionary chapters, which describe the end of the world.

Isaiah describes a feast which God will prepare for people of Israel in Jerusalem. The exiles will celebrate the feast on the mountain where the temple stood before the Babylonians destroyed it.

This meal is more than welcome home festival for Israelites. The prophet describes all nations sharing this table, its food and its fellowship. Isaiah envisions that this communion in God will lift the veil of sorrow and the nations and that God will wipe away every tear.

3 Reflecting on Scripture

SUNDAY BY SUNDAY centers each issue on the Sunday gospel, which it provides in reader parts so group members can proclaim the gospel together. Scripture background and questions invite faith sharing. The questions are what *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* does best, encouraging group members to find the connection between their own life experiences and Jesus' teaching. Each weekly issue also features the Old Testament reading for the Sunday. The reading from Paul's letters is often incorporated in the opening or closing prayer.

1 Community and Mutuality

When people gather regularly to read and discuss the Sunday scriptures, they create community. They decide when and how often to gather and discern ways to respond to the gospel with action. As they continue over time and commit to this way of being church, they experience support, companionship, and challenges from one another.

2 Prayer and Ritual

Each issue of *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* begins and ends with prayer and often with a simple ritual. Praying together at the beginning of the session invites participants into the gospel theme of the Sunday. Sharing petitions and commitments at the close sharpens each person's awareness of the network that makes community.

User FAQs

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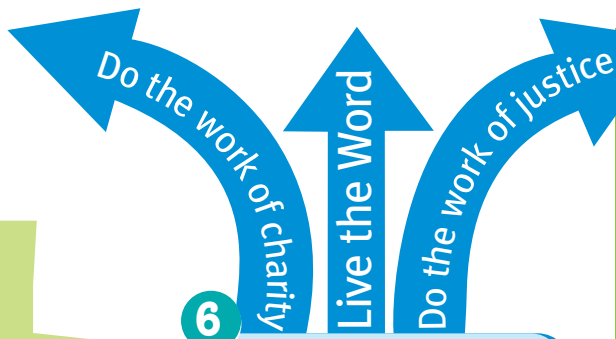
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6 Share prayer to conclude.

God's Feast
On this mountain the Holy One will provide a feast for all of rich food and choice wines, juicy foods and clear wines. On this mountain God will destroy the wall that walls all peoples, wipe the tears from all faces, and take away the disgrace of the people from all the earth.

On that day it will be said, This is our God, to whom we looked to save us, the Holy One for whom we have waited. Let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation. For the hand of God will rest on this holy mountain. *Isaiah 25:6-10*

PRAY
Use the bread to offer blessings on the people they represent. For example, let the rice cakes occasion a blessing for the needs of Asian peoples you know.

LEADER: Creator God, we seek to be doers, not sayers of your word.

ALL: We seek to provide your own harvest for those in need.

5 Reflect on the Old Testament reading.

Social action has two feet: Charity and Justice.

6 Celebrate World Fast Day by convening an informational forum at your parish, exploring how people can participate locally and globally to end hunger. Work with parish teens if possible.

Visit www.millenniumgoals.com to learn about progress and setbacks worldwide toward the eight goals, especially the first goal to halve extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

John Mitchell, CSM, Editor of Sunday by Sunday, holds a Masters in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School and a Ph.D. in New Testament from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN.

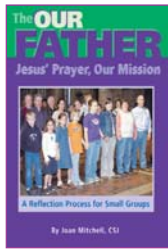
4 Charity and Justice

This logo appears in most *SUNDAY BY SUNDAY* issues. It suggests commitments members of a faith-sharing group can make to act together. The works of charity—staffing food shelves, for instance—



help provide for people's basic needs. The work of justice involves us in changing systems that have adverse effects on our neighbors in our own city and country and throughout the world.

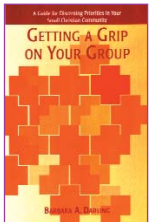
with the Gospel. pages 2 and 3.



Our Father: *Jesus' Prayer and Our Mission*

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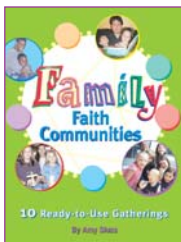
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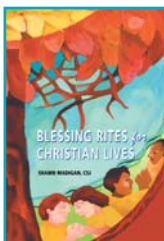
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Sunday by Sunday 2009-2010

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- 10/04/09 27th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 10/11/09 28th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 10/18/09 29th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 10/25/09 30th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 11/01/09 All Saints Day
- 11/08/09 32nd Sunday Ordinary Time
- 11/15/09 33rd Sunday Ordinary Time
- 11/22/09 Christ the King

Unit B Advent/Christmas

9. **Advent Bonus Issue**
- 11/29/09 1st Sunday of Advent
- 12/06/09 2nd Sunday of Advent
- 12/13/09 3rd Sunday of Advent
- 12/20/09 4th Sunday of Advent
- 12/25&27/09 Christmas/Holy Family
- 01/03/10 Epiphany
- 01/10/10 Baptism of the Lord

Unit C Ordinary Time

- 01/17/10 2nd Sunday Ordinary Time
- 01/24/10 3rd Sunday Ordinary Time
- 01/31/10 4th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 02/07/10 5th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 02/14/10 6th Sunday Ordinary Time
22. **Lent Bonus Issue**

Unit D Lent/Easter

- 02/21/10 1st Sunday of Lent
- 02/28/10 2nd Sunday of Lent
- 03/07/10 3rd Sunday of Lent
- 03/14/10 4th Sunday of Lent
- 03/21/10 5th Sunday of Lent
- 03/28/10 Palm/Passion Sunday
- 04/04/10 Easter Sunday
- 04/11/10 2nd Sunday of Easter

Unit E Easter/Pentecost

- 04/18/10 3rd Sunday of Easter
- 04/25/10 4th Sunday of Easter
- 05/02/10 5th Sunday of Easter
- 05/09/10 6th Sunday of Easter
- 05/16/10 Ascension
- 05/23/10 Pentecost Sunday
- 05/30/10 Trinity Sunday
- 06/06/10 Body and Blood of Christ

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- 07/11/10 15th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 07/18/10 16th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 07/25/10 17th Sunday Ordinary Time
- 08/01/10 18th Sunday Ordinary Time

Unit G Ordinary Time

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