

Missionary Commentary

Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

August 10, 2025

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 18:6-9
Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-22
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
Luke 12:32-48

Becoming Credible Servants

Today's Gospel mentions various forms of the word "servant" over a dozen times; we cannot fail to see the emphasis that Luke the Evangelist places on this aspect of Christ's mission. Pope Francis, speaking to new cardinals on June 28, 2018, reminded them—and us—of Christ's call to spend our lives in genuine service of our needy neighbors.

We become credible Christians, the pope noted, as we sit "at the feet of others in order to serve Christ." We must never forget that "Jesus, before bowing his head on the cross, did not hesitate to bow down and wash the feet of the disciples." We are true to our Christian calling if we "serve Christ in God's faithful people" and "serve Christ in those who are hungry, neglected, imprisoned, sick, suffering, addicted to drugs, cast aside."

Authentic Servants. What, then, are some characteristics of a servant in the "Jesus mode"? First, one realizes that discipleship is an invitation that comes from the Lord himself; "You did not choose me. No, I chose you" (Jn 15:16). This gift demands wholehearted, joyful surrender to the *person* of Jesus (not only to an idea or particular apostolate); "Follow me" (Lk 9:59); "Put out into the deep" (Lk 5:4); "Come and see" (Jn 1:39). Thirdly, one will voluntarily accept the hardships that preaching the Gospel entails (2Tim 1:8, 2:3). Thus, Jesus' servant-disciple will "take up his cross every day" (Lk 9:23). One seeks to follow Christ, even when he foretells his passion (Mk 10:32-34). In everything, the disciple realizes that the servant is not above his master (Jn 15:20).

Multiple Forms of Service. The spectrum of service ministries of Jesus' "missionary disciples" is both diverse and comprehensive. It can include faith formation, family life, social action, youth ministry, liturgy, finance and administration, evangelization, vocation promotion, ecumenism, interfaith dialogue; truly, the list seems endless. All these many services can coalesce to bring renewal within our local Christian communities.

Criterion of Authentic Service. Two simple words can help us judge the quality of our Christian lives: **AS I**. At the Last Supper Jesus says: "I give you a new commandment: love one another; just **AS I** have loved you, you must also love one another" (Jn 13:34, cf. 15:12). "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that **AS I** have done for you, you should also do" (Jn 13:14-15). Notice the parallel words: **AS I**. Indeed, Jesus asserts that the model, criterion, and measure of fraternal love and service is none other than his own person.

Conclusion. How do we Christians know if our love is authentic? We measure our deeds against the model exemplified in Jesus' own life. Is our service genuine? We compare ourselves to our Master, who said: "The Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Friends, those very simple words

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“AS I” (only three letters of the alphabet) must guide our daily decisions and actions. How eminently clear! How difficult and challenging!

Notes on the Readings

First Reading – Wisdom 18:6-9

Today's short first reading from the Book of Wisdom was written only a century before the birth of Christ. It is a poetic description of the night of the Tenth Plague when the firstborn of man and beast would be struck; it is the night of the original Passover. The reading praises the religious spirit of the Israelites on the night they ate the sacrificed Passover lamb

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

This psalm praises the Lord for his marvelous deeds, particularly because he has chosen Israel for his special inheritance. It also asks for God's kindness on the people who put their hope and faith in the Lord.

Second Reading – Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

This reading is from the letter to the Hebrews, a profound scholarly work by an unknown author. It encourages us to live, day after day, in faith and hope in a promised future homeland, a heavenly home. Abraham and Sarah are held up as examples of faith; they remained faithful—even when put to the test regarding their only son, Isaac.

Gospel – Luke 12:32-48

Our Gospel today by Saint Luke begins with advice for the poor, the *anawim*, who were most of the Lord's early followers. We must always be ready for the Lord's return, either at the end of the world or when we die. Thus, we strive to have our life's work in order and to always be in the state of God's grace. This task is best accomplished by being generous servants to our neighbors and all those in need.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who has recently published [*Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language*](#) (Orbis Books) as well as [*Exploring Vatican II Treasures: Actors, Events, Insights*](#) and [*A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis*](#) (Faith Alive Books).

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