



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 124

Reading I: Jeremiah 20: 7-9

The prophet Jeremiah speaks to the fact that the role of prophet is not easily lived out. In the opening lines of today's passage from the prophet, we can see that Jeremiah is not all that enamored with continuing his role of prophet. Yet, as the passage comes to a close he speaks the reality that God's word is so powerful that it must be spoken, even at the cost of being unpopular. The word is like a *fire burning within his heart*. The prophet recognizes that **fidelity** to God and God's word is crucial for living a life of integrity. The same is true for us.

Reading 2: Romans 12: 1-2

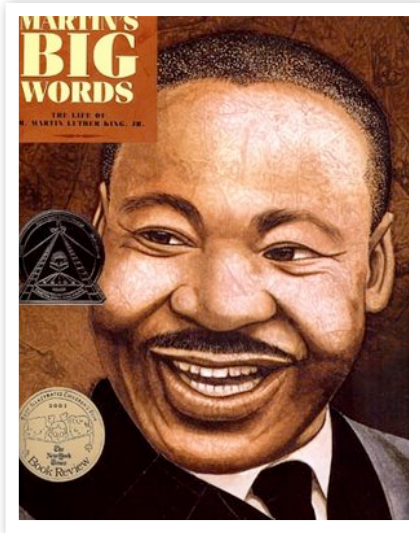
Saint Paul speaks these words of encouragement to the community at Rome, urging them to remain faithful even though they are caught in the midst of persecution. From this passage comes the message that Christians must remember that they are *in* the world but not *of* the world. Saint Paul urges the community and us today to *not conform ourselves to the present age* and places emphasis on the importance of **fidelity**. It is a constant challenge to live the Christian life given the many distractions of the world. Thus, a life steeped in prayer assists us in remaining faithful.

Gospel: Matthew 16: 21-27

Like the *word* that burns within Jeremiah, similarly Jesus' ministry burns within him. Jesus remains faithful to the Father's will, yet understands that there is a price for **fidelity** to divine will. The gospel passage provides the backdrop for Jesus to, as is common in Matthew's gospel, provide teachable moments for the disciples and for us. Saint Peter, who just last week was seen as the *rock*, is now seen as a Satan, a stumbling block to Jesus. Peter wishes Jesus to be the Messiah that he wants and not the one Jesus has been chosen to be by the Father. Jesus remains faithful to his call and enunciates the demanding nature of discipleship. His standards are uncompromising and there is immense importance placed on **fidelity**.



children's
story



Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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character
education
activity

Fidelity is the quality or state of being faithful, most especially to God and God's word.

Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a Caldecott Honor Book that provides an excellent understanding of the meaning of **fidelity** to God's word and what it means to be a prophetic voice in the world. Through an exploration of Dr. King's use of nonviolent protests and the power of words as a weapon for social justice, children will be able to learn more about Dr. King's life and think about their own impact on the future. This account is especially helpful as an example to the children of a modern day person's **fidelity** to their faith in God and the action that spurs them to work for justice.

Activity

Step One: The students may have some very sad feelings after hearing how Dr. King died. It would be appropriate to have a moment of silence and then offer a prayer. After this silent prayer, have the students focus on the the ending statement: *His big words are alive for us today.* Encourage the students to share what they think Dr. King's words mean in our everyday lives.

Step Two: Connect the reading to writing by asking the students to recall all the *big words*. Have them write sentences using these words and have them include the word **fidelity** in their writing as well.

Step Three: Connect the story to art by making a bulletin board or mural illustration of Dr. King's big words. Have the students connect these words to Dr. King's **fidelity** to the person of Jesus Christ, who was his inspiration for all that he did and how he lived.

Step Four: Have the students prepare a timeline of Dr. King's life and how his **fidelity and faithfulness** directed him in all these events that occurred throughout his life.

Fidelity implies strict and continuing faithfulness to an obligation, trust, or duty. For the baptized it means being faithful to our roles of priest, prophet and king.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Make a commitment to understanding the roles given to you at baptism. Those roles include priest, prophet and king. Very simply, it means that as priest, you are called to be a person of prayer and holiness. As prophet, each of us is called to be a person that always stands for, seeks and lives truthfully and honestly no matter the consequence. Finally, to live the baptismal role of king is to be of service to others. Remember that Jesus came to *serve and not be served*. Think about each of these roles and write down ways that you can practice these roles in your day to day life.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around you and identify the people in your life that are models of fidelity, that is faithful in their relationships and duties in life. Ask them what has encouraged them to be such people and how they persevere in their faith. Once you have a better insight into how this works for others, you will start to develop a way of being a person of **fidelity** and **faithfulness** in your own life. Know that God has made you in His image with unique talents and gifts. Recognize that your gifts may be different from others that you see around you. That is a good thing because God has made you to be who you are and given you specific gifts that can be of great service to others. Sometimes we have a tendency to want to be just like someone else but then we would not be the unique image of God we are called to be. Celebrate your gifts and see how you may use these gifts faithfully in your life.

The story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. provides a great parallel for children to understand the prophetic role that Jesus adhered to in his life on earth. It becomes an excellent opportunity early in the faith life of children to understand that God and goodness will always conquer sin and evil. Often times it seems that human beings enter into a world in which living a life of goodness will not exact any type of price or sacrifice. This is often evidenced by the fact that when something goes awry in life, the common reaction is *Why me? What did I do wrong?* This can also be an opportunity to teach children that when one follows Christ, there may indeed be a sacrifice that we were not expecting. It also becomes an opportunity to help understand that, in our prayer, God indeed answers our needs and not necessarily our wants.



closing tool

Pray that you will remain faithful to your relationship with God, with your neighbor, and with all of the creation that God has given to you out of love. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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