

August 30, 2020

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 20:7-9

Rom 12:1-2

Mt 16:21-27

GROW: I miss baseball. Perhaps it's because I am a Cubs fan, but I'm amazed at how humbling the game can be. It's not uncommon to see yesterday's MVP strike out with the bases loaded or an ace relief pitcher blow a save. I wonder if that's how Peter felt when Jesus rebuked him. In last week's Gospel, Peter recognizes Jesus as the Son of the Living God. Jesus blesses him and tells him, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." However, today, after Jesus tells the disciples that he must suffer and die, Peter argues with him. Jesus knocks Peter down a few notches when he calls the would-be rock "an obstacle." But the winning line here is: "You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." Imagine how incomprehensible it was to Peter that Jesus would suffer, die, and rise on the third day. Like Peter, we will have days when we "get it right" and feel in sync with Jesus, and days when we feel like we're chasing the ball in the sun, and yesterday's peace and certainty seem out of reach. In both instances, Jesus reminds us that God really does know best. Whether we're at the top of our game or struggling, it's reassuring to know that God is our rock – and has a plan.

GO: Sometimes my prayers get pretty specific. Please make the chemo obliterate my friend's cancer. Help my husband find a job. Show my son which career path he should choose and help him succeed. When I'm not making God an oncologist, recruiter, or career counselor, I am known to ask him to be a divine meteorologist (Please no rain tomorrow, thank you!). There is nothing wrong with asking for what we desire, or need. But today's Gospel alerts us of the temptation to tell God how to be God. For Peter, it was saying, "Surely you need not suffer and die." Jesus reminds Peter, and us, that we don't know how best to accomplish our salvation. God does. And so, in our prayers and our approach to life, we can ask for God's healing and help, but we also need to trust in God's plan and understand that his answers may not be what we have in mind.

PRAY/REFLECT: It's OK to bring God our to-do list! I'm reminded, however, of a spiritual director who suggested I try to talk less and listen more. It may mean carving out some quiet time each time we pray. Another way to give ourselves over to God's wisdom is by simply reciting the Our Father and paying close attention to the words: "*Thy* kingdom come, *thy* will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."