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Sunday Mass Study Notes for Lectionary 97: 06/28/2026



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes. This week, we'll talk a little bit about the cost of being a disciple of Jesus. We will see how God empowers us by resting in His omnipotent power and by providing us with reminders of His marvelous grace as we look back to our baptism.

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> *2 Kings 4:14-16 NAS95 14 So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Truly she has no son and her husband is old." 15 He said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 Then he said, "At this season next year you will embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant." Omitted: 2Ki 4:17 The woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her.*

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The big idea here is that God is a God of miracles. God sees the larger picture and fills people's needs, even without their asking. Although God desires that we ask to meet our needs (James 4:2), He is able to go above and beyond to provide even the things we don't ask for because we think they are too big for God to provide. This helps us endure times of persecution and suffering. We can be thankful to God for giving us these vivid reminders through the scriptural writings of those believers who went before us.

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The context of the reading from Romans is Paul's teaching on a believer's unity with God through Christ.

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> *Romans 6:8-11 NAS95 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

In the reading, we learn much about the Christian life. We identify with Christ through our water baptism (v. 3). We see a contrast between the old self (v. 6), and our new self who is no longer a slave to sin (v. 6b). This fundamental transformation is brought about through the conversion of our soul. Our dead soul was symbolically buried with Christ at our baptism (v. 3), while our new self came to life when we became united to Christ through faith (v. 8, Ephesians 2:8-9). The big idea is that as believers, we are united with Jesus. Our lost souls were united in Jesus' death for us. Then we were united with Jesus and given a new soul through His resurrection from the dead. These truths are vividly expressed through the act of water baptism, which symbolizes a believer's death to the world and resurrection to the newness of life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Understanding our identity in Christ and holding to it helps us persist during times of persecution for our faith. As we move to the Gospel reading, we will learn more about the promised persecution of believers in Jesus. We can hold onto God's promises and remember that He is a God of miracles even while facing challenges brought about by our faith.

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Gospel Reading:

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> *Matthew 10:37-42 NAS95 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. 40 He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."*

The reading is filled with repeated phrases and the use of a literary technique called parallelism. In the first case, we see the phrase "not worthy of Me" or just the word "Me" repeated multiple times in verses 37 – 40. I counted a total of eight repeats of the word "Me" and three of the phrase "not

worthy of Me." The latter condition, literary parallelism, occurs throughout the reading. Both literary techniques are used to bring attention to the big ideas in the text, the conflict arising from one's choice to follow Jesus, and the rewards of doing so. We see,

"Jesus brought not peace / but a sword."

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> And, "Daughter / against mother," or "daughter-in-law against mother" (imagine that!).
> "He who loves their father or mother more than Me / is not worthy of Me."And,
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> A person "Not willing to carry one's cross / is not worthy of Me."
> "People receive your Gospel message / receives Me."

The reward for persisting in all the conflicts that Jesus warned us about is the reward of a prophet (meaning anyone who carries Jesus' message), and a righteous man (meaning all believers) "vv. 41 – 42), eternal rewards which shall never be taken away "v. 42c).

What does it mean to take up one's cross, follow Jesus, and persist during persecution (v. 38)? I remember, as a child, attending catechism classes and being taught about the burden of carrying one's cross. The context of this teaching, as I remember it, was more about continuing a grueling journey of self-sacrifice rather than the big idea presented by Jesus in the reading. Here, Jesus presented the concept of making hard choices through God's empowerment of us to oppose the worldly kingdom in favor of following Him and presenting His message to a God-rejecting universe. Jesus is clear that these choices could even include forsaking one's own family in order to follow what Jesus is calling one to do. As followers of Jesus, we understand that carrying one's cross for Christ is joyful, not the drudgery I imagined from the picture portrayed in my catechism classes. Jesus said just a few verses later, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. Mt 11:30 "For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30). The bottom line of the reading is that, as believers in Jesus, we must expect persecution and make the hard choices God calls us to make.

There is a popular song from the 70's by Rupert Holmes named "Him" in which the chorus line says, "Him, him, him, what's she gonna do about him?" The meaning of the song is **far** different than our spiritual relationship with God. However, if you are someone like me whose mind is often filled with repeating chorus lines, we do have to ask ourselves the question. Him, him, him, what are **we** going

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Sunday Mass Study Notes for Sunday, 7-02-2017



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"He who loves their father or mother more than Me / is not worthy of Me."

And, "Loves son or daughter more than Me / not worthy of Me."

A person "Not willing to carry one's cross / is not worthy of Me."

"People receive your Gospel message / receives Me."

The reward for persisting in all the conflicts that Jesus warned us about, are the rewards of a prophet (meaning anyone who carries Jesus' message), and a righteous man (meaning all believers) "vv. 41 – 42), eternal rewards which shall never be taken away "v. 42c).

What does it mean to take up one's cross, follow Jesus and persist during persecution (v. 38)? I remember back in my childhood while attending catechism classes how I was taught about the burden of carrying one's cross. The context of this teaching, as I remember it, was more about continuing a grueling journey of self-sacrifice rather than the big idea presented by Jesus in the reading. Here Jesus presented the concept of making hard choices through God's empowerment of us to oppose the worldly kingdom in favor of following Him and presenting His message to a God rejecting universe. Jesus is clear that these choices could even include forsaking one's own family in order to follow what Jesus is calling one to do. As followers of Jesus we understand that carrying one's cross for Christ is joyful, not the drudgery I imagined from the picture portrayed in my catechism classes. Jesus said just a few verses later, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. Mt 11:30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30). The bottom line of the reading is that as believers in Jesus we must expect persecution and make the hard choices that God calls us to do.

There is a popular song from the 70's by Rupert Holmes named "Him" in which the chorus line says, "Him him him, what's she gonna do about him?" The meaning of the song is **far** different than our spiritual relationship with God. However, if you are someone like me whose mind is often filled with repeating chorus lines, we do have to ask ourselves the question. Him him him, what are **we** going to do about him? Jesus calls us to decide what to do about **Him**. It's Him or it's me. Serving God or serving self. This is a conscious step of faith one must make. As believers, we rejoice in the fact that regardless of how we may feel from day to day, our final judgment is not guilty. Jesus has borne our sins on the cross forever. He bore the penalty of our sin by suffering in our place, something that only the perfect sinless Son of God could do. We cannot increase the burden of personal cross and add anything to what Jesus completed for us through His carrying of the cross once and for all.

Reflection Questions

1. As you contemplate the story of Elijah's miracle from the first reading, what are one or two things for which you would like to ask God? Share these with a another believer and ask them to pray that God would bring them about or a change in circumstances.

2. What is your perspective on carrying your cross? In what ways does understanding Jesus' promise of persecution help you in this regard?

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