

Reflection for the 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen (Collect for 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time)

Our Readings this Sunday can be summed up in the first sentence of our Collect Prayer, this sentence can be seen as being comprised of three different parts. The first four words of the prayer “*almighty ever-living God,*” harkens to the First Reading this Sunday, taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Our First Reading this Sunday is taken from Chapter 53, verses 10-11 of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. In this chapter Isaiah prophesies about the suffering of Christ. In verses 10 and 11 of this Chapter, which constitutes our First Reading this Sunday, we hear of the affliction that Christ is to suffer. We also hear that in this suffering Christ will justify many and He will bear their guilt. In these two verses that make up our First Reading this Sunday we are reminded of God’s salvific plan for humanity, and with this reminder we can cry out “*almighty ever-living God,*” for it is through the love of our almighty and ever-living God that we can look forward to salvation. The first four words of our Collect Prayer this Sunday can and should remind us of God’s salvific plan for all humanity.

In the second part of the first sentence of the Collect Prayer this Sunday we hear the words, “*grant that we may always conform our will to yours,*” we have this message in which we are all called not to go our own way but to embrace the will of our Heavenly Father. In our Second Reading this Sunday taken from the Letter of Hebrews, we hear of Jesus, the Son of God, being able to sympathize with our weaknesses, because He had been tested in every way, so we can approach Him and receive mercy and grace from Him. In receiving God’s grace and mercy, we are capable of conforming, our will to His will. It is through God’s love that we are empowered to conform our will to His.

The third and final part of the first sentence of our Collect Prayer this Sunday is, “*serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.*” In our Gospel this Sunday taken from the Gospel of Mark we hear of the brothers, James and John, coming to Jesus and asking Him for a favor, “*grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left.*” This request is clearly a worldly request and not one based on the teachings or the life of Jesus Christ. But here are two of the closest followers of Christ, members of His inner circle, looking at life in a very worldly way. Jesus takes the opportunity to speak to the Twelve and inform them of what it means to be a Servant Leader. Christ came into the world to serve and not be served. To be a true Servant Leader requires a change of heart. In our Gospel reading this Sunday we can clearly see that James and John are still needing a change of heart to become true Servant Leaders.

The first sentence of our Collect Prayer this Sunday encapsulates the message of our Readings and provides us with what we can and should take from the celebration of the 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time. I recently read an article in the Catholic Herald written by Kim Mandelkow, in this article with the title, “*What is the Collect,*” the author of the article points out that the Collect or Opening Prayer concludes the Introductory Rites of the Mass. But this closing prayer to the Introductory Rites should be seen as more than just the final part of the Introductory Rites. Rather the Collect should be seen as the moment we enter into the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We as a people gather our prayers and thoughts together as we enter the communal celebration of the Source and Summit of our Faith. The Collect Prayer at Mass always starts with the Priest saying, “*Let us Pray,*” This simple statement by the Priest is an invitation for all of us gathered, to take a moment to pause and collectively bring our thoughts and prayers together, so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is one in which all who are gathered participate in the Celebration. The Collect Prayers that we have in the Roman Missal used at every Mass, are not prayers that were written back in the 1960’s or 70’s, with the update of the Mass that came from the Vatican II Council. Rather many of these prayers date back to

the 7th century and earlier, they are part of the rich deposit of our Faith. On the 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time we are blessed to have a Collect Prayer that not only calls us to worship our one true God but reminds us of the message that is found in our Readings this Sunday. A message of becoming a Servant Leader through conforming our hearts to the will of our Savior, who gave His life for our salvation.