



## Cycle A

### Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 103

#### Reading I: Isaiah 55: 10-11

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the unbounded graciousness and generosity that God pours upon all creation, especially upon humanity, the crown of His creation. He uses the images of rain and snow watering the earth as a symbol of the graces that God pours upon men and women, trusting fully that those graces and blessings will be extended to all of creation through the good works of all people. God's **generosity** is intended to be extended to all and in doing so, God is given praise and thanks.

#### Reading 2: Romans 8: 18 -23

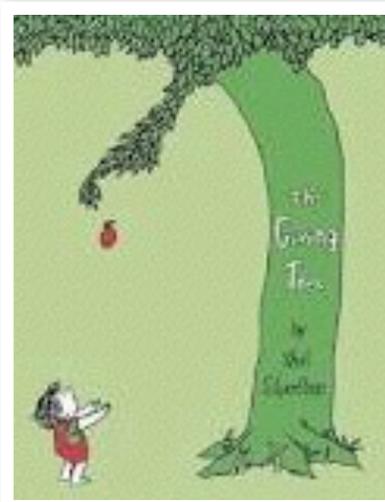
This letter from Saint Paul to the church at Rome speaks of anticipating a **generosity** that is promised but has yet to come. He continues in this passage with the image of a woman in labor when he states; *all of creation is groaning in labor*. In this depiction he expresses a hope that is common to all human beings, which is that in all of life there is a sense of "more" that wishes fulfillment. We, who have experienced time and again the **generosity** of our God, can expect that **generosity** to visit us again, even when we may be caught in the travails and difficulties that are a natural part of life.

#### Gospel: Matthew 13: 1-23

The parable of the sower and the seed is simple enough, for it speaks of the miraculous power of God present in the ministry of Jesus. The sower of the seed is God and the seed is God's word seeking to find soil in which to grow. God's intention is that his **generosity**, love and abundance be made available to all. However, there must be an openness, a fertile ground for the seed (the word of God) in which to take root. There are many things that may prevent or promote God's **generosity** to come into fruition. As human beings we have been given free will to respond or not respond to God's movement and **generosity** in our lives. This parable is a prime example of that free will given to us by God. We are always given a choice and our choice will determine how widespread God's **generosity** will be actualized and realized in the world.



children's  
story



### The Giving Tree.

Written by Shel Silverstein

Illustrated by Shel Silverstein

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character  
education  
activity

**Generosity is the quality of being kind and exemplifying kindness while providing for the needs of others with an open heart and a willing spirit.**

## The Giving Tree

In *The Giving Tree*, a little boy loved a tree, and the tree loved the little boy as well. Everyday the boy would play in the shade of the tree, eat its apples, and slide down its trunk and swing from its branches. But in time, the little boy grew into a man and the relationship changed. This is a classic book for teaching children of all ages about **generosity** and the self-sacrifice that often accompanies it. This is indeed a tender story, touched with sadness and then aglow with consolation. Silverstein provides a parable that offers an affecting interpretation of the gift of giving (**generosity**) and a serene acceptance of another's capacity to love in return.

## Activity

Step One: Make use of a free bulletin board in the classroom and place a large tree with trunk, limbs and branches extended over a large portion of the board.

Step Two: Provide the students with various colored construction paper leaves on which they can write acts of kindness. They might even be referred to as *generosity leaves*. Provide each of students with anywhere from 5 to 8 leaves on which to write various acts of kindness.

Step Three: Ask the students to share some of the things they wrote on their *leaves of generosity* with others in the class. Instruct them to be quiet as each students shares one or more of their acts of kindness aloud.

Step Four: Provide each student with an envelope with their name on it so that they can place their *generosity leaves* inside for safe keeping. These envelopes will then be stored in a file box alphabetically. Throughout the semester or whatever time period you choose, invite a few students to share with the class one of the kindnesses they have done and have them take the appropriate leaf from their file envelope and place it upon the tree. Soon the barren tree will be filled with *generosity leaves* representing good works done by the students.

**“That’s what I consider true generosity: you give your all, and yet you always feel as if it cost you nothing.”**

*Simone de Beauvoir*



**case study**

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

## **What could you do today?**

Today and every day you can think of the many people that God has worked through to show you his love and blessings. Being thankful for the kindness and generosity of another person is one of the most important things you can do as a follower of Jesus Christ. Make a list of the names of these people on one side of a piece of paper and directly opposite their name write the kindness that they have shown to you. Make a commitment to create a “thank you” card and write a note to them thanking them for their **generosity**. This can be an on-going activity that can help you to realize all the ways that God has visited you through other people.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

The **generosity** shown to us daily through various events and people is God’s way of making himself know to us. There are, in fact, so many kindnesses that come our way that we can easily take them for granted without not meaning to do so. To remind us of these many acts of kindness, it might serve us well to construct a diary or journal of thanks for the **generosities** shown us. Create a “Giving and Receiving” journal so that you can recall the times you have been the recipient of a kindness and also record the times you have done something **generous** and kind for another person.

In Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*, we hear a parable about generosity and the virtuous life that comes from giving. The readings for this weekend are reflective of the **generosity** that is always extended by God. The key lesson to be learned is to realize the overwhelming **generosity** that comes our way throughout life and to be grateful and express that gratitude in a way that extends God's **generosity** by celebrating our blessings and gifts with others. This is an excellent way to both honor and thank God.

Pray Psalm 103 which gives thanks to God for his **generosity** and prays that we will never forget God's graciousness



closing  
tool

Psalm 103: 1-2

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his  
benefits. Amen.*



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