



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 139

Reading I: Isaiah 5: 1-7

At first this prophecy of Isaiah looks as if God is about to give up on the nation of Israel. Throughout the text we're reminded that the owner of the vineyard has done all he could to insure a good harvest, however the result is that the vineyard has produced nothing but bitter grapes in spite of all efforts. The vineyard is identified as *the house of Israel* and the vinedresser, by implication, as the *Lord*. The last verse of the passage identifies the people of Judah as God's *cherished plant*. It is this phrase that speaks of God's **perseverance** in loving and never abandoning the people God has created in His image.

Reading 2: Philippians 4: 6-9

This letter from Saint Paul speaks of a people that are called to **perseverance**. His instruction, given at the conclusion of the passage, instructs the people of Philippi to *keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. The God of peace will be with you.*

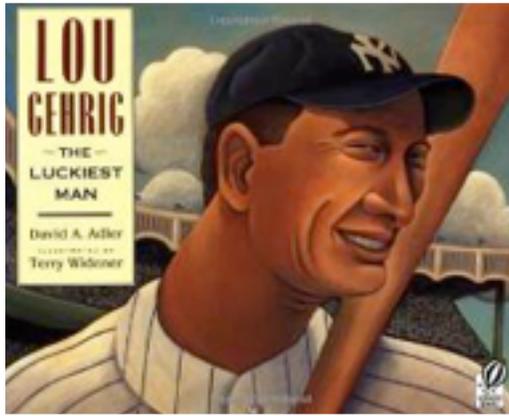
Saint Paul urges the people to remain steadfast and faithful. In other words, He calls us to **persevere** in living lives that are virtuous and based on Christian principles.

Gospel: Matthew 21: 33-43

Jesus' story opens much like Isaiah's reading for today: upbeat and without a hint of gloom to follow. The gospel actually speaks to God's **persevering** nature through sending prophet after prophet to the people hoping that they would hear and obey. The final messenger is the vineyard owner's son (God's Son) and still they will not listen. Beyond that, they put the son to death. Ultimately God will not destroy the vineyard, but rather, will entrust it to others. This too, in a way, is a revelation of the **persevering** nature of God as God looks upon His creation.



children's
story



Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man

Written by David A. Adler

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character
education
activity

Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man

Lou Gehrig's **perseverance** is legendary. During fourteen years as a first baseman for the New York Yankees, he played in a record 2,130 consecutive games, earning himself the nickname the Iron Horse.

Lou loved baseball and considered himself a very lucky man even though on his thirty-sixth birthday he was diagnosed with a very rare disease, ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). This story is inspirational and is by far one of the best illustration of a spirit of **perseverance**.

Activity

Step One: Read the story aloud to the students or if the reading proficiency of students allows, have them take turns reading the story aloud in class. Instruct the students to conduct an online search to learn more about Lou Gehrig. Specifically ask them to look for evidence of his **perseverance** and how that virtue served him in life.

Step Two: Individually or in groups, have them use the material they gathered from the on-line search to produce a poster or flyer to illustrate the virtuous character of this man.

Step Three: Have the students make a presentation of their work to the class, again individually or in groups.

Step Four/Follow-Up Activity: Have the students experience and participate in a virtual field trip from the Baseball Hall of Fame entitled *Lou Gehrig: The Iron Horse*. (baseballhall.org)

Perseverance is a theme that occurs throughout the Scriptures and especially in the letters of Saint Paul. One such example is 2 Thessalonians 3:13 "brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is right"

Perseverance means having the self-discipline to continue a task in spite of being confronted with difficulties.



case study

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

What could you do today?

This activity could be called “memory recall.” Reflect on something you learned to do in the past, possibly learning to ride a bike or learning how to swim. Try as best as you can to recall all the elements of the learning process, the setbacks, your feelings about the setbacks, wanting to give up, what spurred you on and how you felt when you finally succeeded. Once you have remembered all of this, think of what challenge or accomplishment you wish to move forward with, knowing that there might be set backs. Recall that you have moved above setbacks before and you will do so again. This can be an ongoing process when you find yourself faced with a new goal or accomplishment. You can look at past successes and allow them to spur you on to the next goal or challenge. It is **perseverance** that assists us along the way to every accomplishment.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around at the many people in history and present day who are great examples of **perseverance**. You will notice that most of these individuals have identified that their inspiration and support has come from God. Trust and belief that God is with you as God has been with others who have **persevered** in the face of obstacles. Go forward now with the confidence that in the process of trying new things there will be challenges and failures that will bring you to greater accomplishments than you could have ever dreamed of. You see this is how God works in our lives. We may seek something and God will see to it that we receive something even greater than we were looking for. That’s just how God works!

In this inspirational story about *Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man* we are able to encounter a person who approached everything in life with a great sense of commitment. He would not be deterred from any challenge including any adversity that came his way. Once we have made a commitment to being a follower of Jesus, we will encounter challenges, that at first, may seem insurmountable. However, we must recall and trust that Jesus is with us in all things. It was this reality that made Saint Paul and other men and women **persevere** in living a life dedicated to goodness.



**closing
tool**

Pray that when you are feeling weak, tired, or discouraged that you will remember that you are not alone, for God is always with you and most especially in challenging times.

You may wish to do an online search for a printable copy of the “Footsteps Prayer.”



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