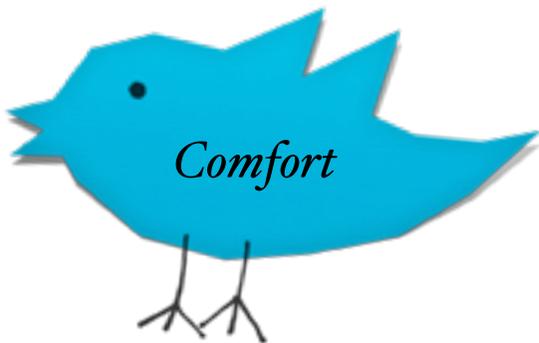




build. plant. grow.
the word this week



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Lectionary # 160

Reading I: Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-17

Ezekiel speaks words of **comfort** to the people of Israel who continue to be held in captivity. He **comforts** the people with words that specifically state that God himself will be their shepherd and king. These words will bring great hope and **comfort** to the Israelites for they have had dismal leadership and the succession of false shepherds and kings led them astray and resulted in their captivity. Ezekiel proclaims that God *will seek the lost, bind the injured and heal the sick*. These are all words of comfort and consolation.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28

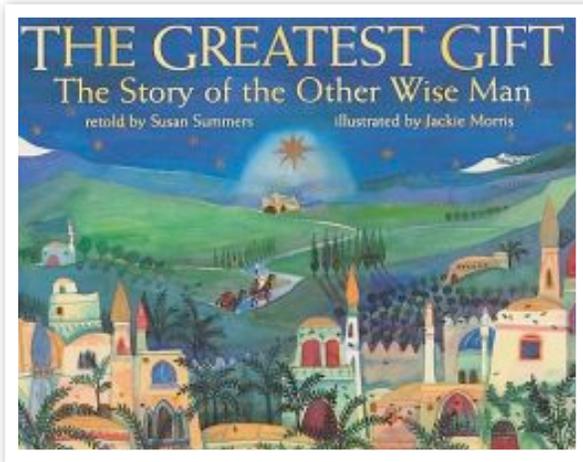
Saint Paul brings great **comfort** to the people of Corinth with the opening statement of his letter. His greeting announces the flourishing good news that Christ is raised from dead and that just as Christ is raised from the dead and lives, so too will they (and us). Although all the faithful will one day experience resurrected life, there is a time of difficulty and challenge that accompanies life on earth. Even so, it is the Christ, living in us, that extends **comfort** and hope to us through knowing that we will have everlasting life in the pattern of Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46

This particular passage from Saint Matthew's Gospel is commonly referred to as the Final Judgement. In today's reading we encounter a kingly figure coming down from the heavens and sitting on a glorious throne. However, it is important to see that he identifies himself with the weakest and the poor, so much so that he insists there is no distinction between himself and them. Included in this passage is what have been traditionally been referred to in Catholic Tradition as the *corporal works of mercy* that all followers of Jesus Christ are commissioned to be about in their daily lives. As such we are to be those who give **comfort** to those most in need and in doing so bring **comfort** to the Christ.



children's
story



The Greatest Gift: The Story of The Other Wise Man

Written by Henry Van Dyke and retold by Susan Summers

Illustrated by Jackie Morris

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character
education
activity

**The verb form of the word
“comfort” is active and thus
calls one to soothe in times of
affliction and distress.**

The Greatest Gift: The Story of the Other Wise Man

This is an abridged version of the original work by Henry Van Dyke originally published in 1895. It is the perfect story for this celebration of Christ the King in the Cycle A readings for it brings further dimension to the Gospel passage. The Fourth Wise Man, given the name Artaban, searches all of his adult life for a new born king. A work of mercy for another person in distress caused a delay in meeting with the other three Wise Men. This delay caused the Three Wise Men to leave Artaban behind. Undeterred by many setbacks and disappointments, he continues his search, hoping to give his gifts of an emerald, a ruby and a pearl of great value when he finally finds the king. His search turns from weeks into months and then into years. During the search for the king, Artaban uses the gifts intended for the king to assist others in need. Ultimately he learns that he has found the king in those he helped. *For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink.....for whenever you did it to one of the least of my brothers or sisters you did it for ME.*

Activity

Introduction: Although this feast is the conclusion of the liturgical year it can well set the stage for the season of Advent.

Step One: In the prayer corner of the classroom or another convenient location erect an artificial Christmas Tree.

Step Two: Inquire from an Outreach Group what Christmas gifts might be provided for the people in need.

Step Three: Provide the students with red, green and white construction paper so that they can cut out emeralds, rubies and pearls that can be placed upon the Christmas Tree.

Step Four: Punch holes in the top of the “gems” and attach string or yarn in order to hang them on the tree. Assign one needed item to each student and have them write the name of the item on their “gem.”

Step Five: During the first week of Advent have the children find their “gem” on the tree and then invite them to purchase the item and place it under the tree for distribution to the needy.

“Comfort” in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is seen as encouragement, whether by words or presence to one in need.



case study

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

What could you do today?

In many areas of the world the weather is beginning to become colder. When any of us feel cold we certainly are not **comfortable**. Ask your family members if they have coats, scarfs, hats and gloves that they are not using but are still in very good shape. If these items exist and the members of the family would cheerfully give them up, gather the items and give them to an agency that would see to it that these items of clothing would find new persons to keep warm. You might, as a family, deliver these gifts to the agency. In the process you may find out that there are other needs the agency has that your family might be able to supply for the **comfort** of others.

Look Feel Know Act

Few of us will have the such “gems” as the ruby, emerald and pearl of great value that Artaban had to offer to Jesus Christ the King. However, we have learned that any gift given with love to those in need has great meaning. At times we might easily forget that a smile, a kind word or an embrace may be just the gift of **comfort** a person may be in need of. Look at the personal gifts that God has given you and recognize that when those gifts are given the gift does not diminish but rather grows greater.

Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta once said to her sisters and to the world that *we are not asked to do great things but rather are called to do simple things with great love. We all can do something simple for another with great love.*

The story of *The Greatest Gift: The Story of the Other Wise Man* so clearly illustrates the corporal works of mercy in a manner that will be held in the hearts and minds of those who hear the story. Here we have a saying of Jesus that is placed in story form and for many the values and ethics are remembered because of the story. The **comfort** that the Other Wise Man brings to those in distress put a face to the ones Jesus refers to as *the least of my brothers or sisters*.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will ask the Lord to help you recognize and then reach out to those who are in need of compassion and comfort. Seek to see the face of Jesus Christ in those in need. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

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