



build. plant. grow.
the word this week

Cycle C

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #132

Reading I: Exodus 32: 7-11, 13-14

In the Exodus reading we see that the Lord is deeply grieved and angered by the lack of faithfulness on the part of the people Israel. While Moses is receiving the Ten Commandments in order to help the people live good and faithful lives, the people have turned away from God and have made an idol looking like a calf. The Lord, with the prompting of Moses, decides to show **compassion** and mercy towards the people of Israel. The story recounts the saving and loving deeds that the Lord has performed.



ordinary
time



Reading 2: 1 Timothy 1: 12-17

Saint Paul writes to Timothy, the leader of one of the churches left behind, as he continued his mission. In this letter Saint Paul speaks of the great **compassion and mercy** and mercy that the Lord has shown him even in spite of his early history of persecuting the church. He speaks of the fact that it was for forgiveness that Jesus came into the world and thus to reveal yet again the passion and **compassion** that God has for us.



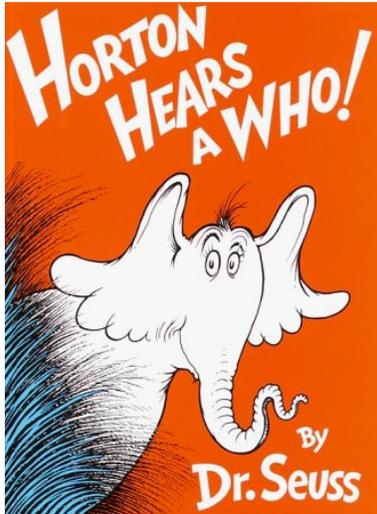
lectionary
reading

Gospel: Luke 15: 1-32

Saint Luke's Gospel shares three beautiful stories about the joy that God experiences when there is the return of someone lost. The first story is of the one lost sheep of the 99 that the Good Shepherd goes in search of. The second story portrays God as the woman who searched for the lost coin and once it is found wants everyone to rejoice with her. And the final story in this excerpt of Saint Luke's gospel is of the Prodigal Son. In each instance the individual representing God is filled with **compassion** and is overjoyed at the return of that which was lost.



children's story



Horton Hears a Who!

Written by Dr. Seuss

Copyright 1954 Random House Books for Young Readers

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character
education
activity

Compassion is entering into the world of another person who is struggling in order to understand and help them.

Horton Hears a Who!

“A person’s a person, no matter how small,” Dr. Seuss would say in his beautiful manner that children want what we all want; to laugh, to be challenged, and to be entertained. This story of Horton, who is concerned about the tiniest of creatures, shows deep **compassion** and perseverance. Horton is heroic in his concern and regard for others even at great inconvenience. Besides lessons in **compassion**, there are other values to be gleaned from this wonderful story, such as the importance of kindness, trustworthiness, and perseverance.

Each of us is called to respond to the needs of those who God places in our life’s path. We are not called to do extraordinary things, but as Blessed Theresa of Calcutta expressed: *we are called to do ordinary things with extraordinary love*. Often times we might think that we have to do big things to achieve holiness. However, true holiness comes through living our ordinary lives while loving deeply God and others.

Looking at the three examples that are placed before us in the gospel, we can see that we are called to seek and to find just as the Good Shepherd did in searching for the lost sheep, as the woman searched for the lost coin, and as the father kept watch day in and day out for the return of his son. All of this reflects that this is God’s work facilitated through us. It is not your work or my work, it is God’s work, and it is so important to keep this before us.

Lost and Found

Step One: Recall a time when you lost or misplaced something very important to you. What was your initial feeling when that item was lost? How did you feel physically and emotionally? What were the first steps you took in trying to find the lost item? How did you feel when you finally located the item?

Step Two: Do one of the following based on the things you discovered in Step One:

- a. Develop a poem or a rap based on the events of losing and finding
- b. Write and illustrate a story about the events and portray yourself as either the lost item or the one in search of the lost item.

Being a compassionate person is one of the most important ways for us to reflect ourselves as images of God!



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Become familiar with a local need and ask yourself and those around you how you and others might help the situation. For example, often times the Saint Vincent de Paul Society of each parish, which provides food and personal hygiene items, finds themselves in short supply. Once they identify when these times are, you and your family and or classmates might be able to collect the needed items. One of the traditions of the church has been to make these actions a prayer. In doing these ordinary things with prayer and **compassion** for those who are in need we express an extraordinary love.

Look Feel Know Act

Think of the word **compassion** in two parts, com-passion. “Com” in Latin means with and so we could easily see that we are called to live life “with-passion.” In this case it means having a passion for loving God and loving our neighbor.

Loving God with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, and all of our strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves is a passionate way of living. When we take that great energy and apply it to living for others we enter into **compassion**.

When we place ourselves in another persons shoes, we enter into what is known as empathy, a word which means “to feel as another person feels.” This is the first part of living as a **compassionate** human being. Once we enter into this mode of feeling we can then ask ourselves: *If I was in this situation what would I want for myself, how would I want someone to respond?* The answer to this question would then provide us with a beginning of how we might show **compassion** for the person. There will be a number of stages to being **compassionate**, but the first stage is to enter into the feelings of the other person and then to let them know that we stand with them. How we will stand with them will be determined by the needs of the person.



closing tool

In *Horton Hears a Who*, we see Horton wanting to help in any way he can. He goes out of his way and often meets some challenges to do what he believes to be the right thing. His commitment and **compassion** for others spurs him on, and in doing so, many good things happen for others. God's **compassion** for us should be our motivation for being **compassionate** to others. One of the great saints of the Church is Saint Theresa of Avila, and she actually composed a prayer speaking to the fact that God's **compassion** can be known here on earth through our activities. One of the phrases from that prayer is this: *Christ has no hands on earth but ours...."*

Pray to God for a heart that will be open to how others feel and then pray for the wisdom and understanding of what you are called to do to be loving to that person.



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