

Sunday's READINGS

Wisdom 2:12, 17–20
James 3:16–4:3
Mark 9:30–37

Scan the code to read today's readings. ➔



Opening PRAYER

Change my heart, O Lord, that I may move from thinking only of my will to trusting in your will for me and for the world. Amen.



Thoughts for REFLECTION

Discuss the thought process you employ when you make a decision for yourself or your family.

Name the obstacles that would prevent you from resolving a conflict with someone who has harmed you.



What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

Wisdom 2:12, 17–20

The writer of the Book of Wisdom speaks in the voice of the wicked speaking about a righteous (holy) man, whose goodness is a thorn in their side. The wicked employ a test. They will torture the holy man and put him to death. If he is a son of God, God will take care of him. The reference to the son of God here is not a reference to the Second Person of the Trinity. The Israelites used the term *sons and daughters of God* to refer to themselves. In this passage, the writer is using that phrase to refer to this man who is good and just.

James 3:16–43

We will explore three separate thoughts in this reading. In the first, James uses the word *disorder* to describe sin. This is a reality of sin that we often ignore. God's created order is harmony and peace. Sin disorders God's plan. The effects of sin disorder our personal lives and disorder our communal lives. Second, James identifies the cause of war in our inability to deal with our personal conflicts. As disciples, if we are not in the practice of examining our own thoughts, words, and deeds, how can we

be sure they are not disordered? Finally, in the last verse, James tells his community that if they ask God for whatever is in his plan, they will receive it. Like any good parent, God will give his children what they need, or what is good for them.

Mark 9:30–37

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus refer to the Son of Man. This title is not a reference to Jesus' humanity. It is a reference to Daniel, an Old Testament prophet, who has a vision that the Ancient of Days (God the Father) will send the Son of Man (the Messiah). The Israelites understood this to mean that God would send a king with supernatural powers who would free them from the oppressors, who, at this time, were the Romans. The messiah would rule. Peace and justice would reign. When Jesus speaks about suffering, it makes no sense to the disciples. Proof of their lack of understanding is evident as they argue about which one of them would be the most powerful in Jesus' Kingdom. Jesus tries to be clearer. He embraces a child as an example of the need to embrace God's plan.

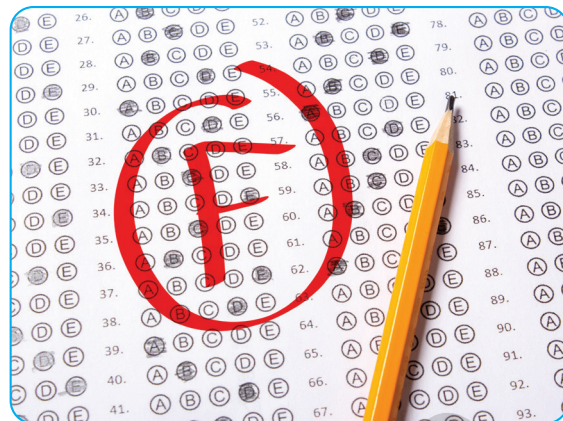


Points to Ponder

Did I Pass?

In the reading from the Book of Wisdom, the wicked want to test the good person. Can he really remain faithful if he experiences torture and death? We may have heard people in our lives say, “God is testing you.” Whether it is evil or God who is doing the testing, the presumption is that you will either pass or fail. Passing gets you to Heaven. Failing gets you to Hell. The problem with this thinking is that it is not in harmony with the teaching or the life of Jesus. The whole of our spiritual life cannot be based on failing or passing a test. Holiness is the journey into deeper and deeper relationship with Jesus. Difficulties and challenges will arise. They come from various sources. When these come into our lives, a disciple’s questions are “What can I learn about God from this?” and “What is this experience teaching me about myself and my relationship to God?” The person who asks these questions is truly wise.

- If a person changes his or her perspective from God as test-giver to God as wisdom, how would that change the person’s relationship with God?



There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.

—Saint John Vianney

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Scan here for Pflaum Eucharist resources. ➔



Connecting **GOSPEL**

and CHURCH TEACHING

God, the Giver of Life

God does not test your faith. He uses all situations and people to increase your faith. Remembering that faith is not a thing but a relationship, you can recognize that God is also trying to offer you a good. In every situation, the Holy Spirit is urging you to choose the grace God offers. God does not do evil. God allows it and at the same instant invites you to allow him to redeem it. The image of God as a cruel boot camp officer who just wants to see if he can break you is the absolute opposite of a God who

is willing to die on the Cross to save us. A Church document entitled “The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life” describes the Holy Trinity in this way: “[T]he three divine persons in one God are committed to the same mission: to accompany humanity in the discovery of love, and to the understanding of who God is” (p. 20). Jesus has revealed that what God desperately desires for us is a life in communion with him.

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 142–155 or go to Booklet 5, Session 3 in *Growing Faith*.



Closing PRAYER

Holy Spirit, you are the Giver of Life. Teach us that life begins in the love of the Trinity. Each day, we are invited to know your presence and your love in a deeper way. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

How can you serve others and help them with difficulties they are experiencing?



Family Prayer

Lord, help us to see you when we see people in need. Amen.