

August 30, 2026 Homily
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/083026.cfm>

With all the natural disasters that we see happening now, and the growing violence in the world, we must be open to listen to what the planet is speaking to us. Both our violence and our economy not only cause suffering and death among us; they also affect the environment. Life is fragile. We must respect and protect all forms of life. All these catastrophic forces also generate despair and fear among us. Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus never, never told his disciples, "If you follow me, you will have financial success, or you will never get sick, or you will never die in a natural disaster."

Jesus has never promised a life without suffering or without challenges to his disciples. Rather, He calls them and us to "Take up our crosses and follow Him." He mentions the cross, not only to talk about the suffering and pain that we go through during life. He also uses the cross as an analogy of something that can be a heavy burden for us to carry. And even more important in our world is to proclaim the Gospel of love that is always counter-cultural, because the Gospel is offensive to those who live in the comforts of the world at the expense of their neighbor's sufferings.

The Word of God is, as Jeremiah knew, not always a word of comfort, but often a word of challenge. And the one who proclaims the gospel of justice and love is subject to hateful reactions and persecution. So, what is it about God's message that is so challenging, that it drives faithful people to despair? The Gospel brings good news to the poor, release for the captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. It is good news to those who are oppressed, bound, or blind. It is good news for those who repent and seek God's help in being restored and made whole.

But the Gospel is bad news, offensive, for those who don't recognize their need to be made new in Christ. The message of Christ is offensive to some of us, because it calls us to live, not according to the law, or according to our political and social values, but according to God's love. Jesus calls us to be forgiving, to be inclusive and willing to touch the unclean unholy mess of humanity in order to share God's love. Jesus invites us to sink our hands into the wounds of the suffering, to sit beside the careless sinner, and share a meal with him. Jesus calls us to see on the face of one another, not our present failures, but our promising future. And the promise of today's Gospel is this: If

we do what Jesus calls us to do, we will face persecution, mockery, and rejection. We will carry a cross and lose our life for this world, but we will find the fullness of life in God.

When we take the Gospel and make it part of our lives, we die to the seductive ways of the world, and then we have life to the fullest. What can truly change the world is the Gospel of love, if we live it out, if we proclaim it, if others feel they want to embrace it. In the midst of so much suffering, hatred and violence, with Jesus, we can heal the wounds of the hurting and despairing; We can welcome the stranger as a brother or sister in Christ; We can restore the dignity of those who are broken by sin and loneliness, and we can restore the way we interact with God's creation, promoting a just and respectful economy.

This time, as we face so much uncertainty, we are challenged to face the current situation with faith and common sense. The world calls us to seek comfort, control, social status, and power. Jesus calls us to be disciples always involved in empowering the oppressed, promoting justice and peace, feeding the hungry, supporting the poor, fighting injustice, protecting the persecuted and the vulnerable, and caring for the environment. There is a broken world, thirsting and starving for the proclamation of the Gospel of love. And we Christians have the potential to feed, heal, reconcile, unite and save this world with the love of Jesus, proclaimed by our words and actions. Does our faith in Jesus lead us to always act with righteousness, mercy and love?

The Universal Prayer
Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
30th August 2026

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, reflecting upon God's mercy we offer our lives as a holy sacrifice in union with Jesus' sacrifice in the Eucharist.

1. For Pope Leo, that his words for peace and human dignity, will help transform our world into God's kingdom.

We pray to the Lord.

2. For a culture of encounter through which, in meeting each other, we may understand different nationalities, faiths and traditions, and so celebrate our diversity.

We pray to the Lord.

3. For the people in Palestine and across the Middle East, in Ukraine and Russia, within Sudan and Myanmar, that justice, political stability and the progress of citizens will unfold peacefully.

We pray to the Lord.

4. For our fellow Christians who endure the cross of persecution and continuous harassment because of their faith in Jesus, that they will find in him the grace to persevere.

We pray to the Lord.

5. For our brothers and sisters in Nepal and Tibet after the catastrophic flash floods, and for those people struggling with Ebola and Bird Flu, through earthquakes, wildfires, floods, landslides and drought, that leaders will be wise, scientists diligent, emergency workers and medical staff courageous, and all be sustained in hope.

We pray to the Lord.

6. For the religious order of the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe and for the Diocese of Raleigh, that both may have an increase in the number of vocations to religious life and to the priesthood.

We pray to the Lord.

7. For our departed, and for all who have died in the recent catastrophic events in our planet, that all will enter the glory of God, and receive a merciful judgement.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

O God, in the midst of life's weary situations, we thirst for you, longing for your strength, so that we can always praise you with joy.

Through Christ our Lord.