

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

21st Sunday  
in Ordinary Time, Year B  
August 22, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor



Entrance: :  
713  
Amazing Grace.  
Recessional:  
628  
How Great Thou

## SATURDAYS:

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Holy Hour  
3:45 pm to 4:15 pm – Confessions  
4:30 pm – HOLY MASS

## SUNDAYS:

7:15 am to 8:15 am – Holy Hour  
7:45 am to 8:15 am – Confessions  
8:30 am – HOLY MASS

## Entrance Hymn: AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved and set me free  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

## Recessional: HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
How great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
How great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades  
I wander,  
And hear the birds sing swiftly in the trees  
When I look down from lofty mountain  
grandeur  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle  
breeze.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
How great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
How great thou art, how great thou art!

## UNIVERSAL PRAYERS

### CELEBRANT:

My friends, as faithful disciples it is our duty to pray for the world. Let us remember all those who most need our prayers.

### LECTOR:

- 1) We pray for the Church ... for Pope Francis, for all bishops and pastors ... for deacons and all ministers to the poor ... for all lay ministers and those who care for the sick ... let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who struggle with faith, especially those who have been hurt by the church or by other believers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those about to be married, and for those whose marriages are strained or broken, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) We pray for religious tolerance in our world, where different races and cultures can live in mutual respect and where peace and justice reign, built and guided by love. At this time, we pray in particular for the people of Afghanistan, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) We pray for the people of Haiti, for those who died and for those who have lost loved ones in last week's tragic earthquake, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) For the sick, especially those in constant agony, that they receive effective pain relief and know God's closeness, let us pray to the Lord.

### CELEBRANT:

Loving God, you led your people to the Promised Land and sent your Son to lead us home to you. Guide us in your ways as you listen to our needs and grant them through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### COLLECTIONS:

Aug. 14-15:  
\$917.00

Via Online,  
Aug. 15-17:  
\$105.00



### The Mystery of Faith:

When we eat this Bread  
and drink this Cup, we  
proclaim your Death, O  
Lord, until you come again.

# THE READINGS. . . SOME REFLECTIONS. . . AND GUIDEPOSTS.

## Introduction to the Liturgy of the Word

Today's readings are about decisions, challenges and hard choices. Choices that involve commitments are the hardest because of their long-lasting implications. The tribes of Israel gathered before Joshua in the first reading could not avoid the hard questions, nor could the early Christians in today's Gospel. We can't avoid them either.

As we listen to today's readings, let us consider how we would answer each challenge and pray that our commitment to our faith be strengthened.

### **First Reading:**

**Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b**

<sup>1</sup>Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, summoning their elders, their leaders, their judges, and their officers. When they stood in ranks before God, <sup>2a</sup>Joshua addressed all the people: <sup>15</sup>"If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your fathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are now dwelling. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." <sup>16</sup>But the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord for the service of other gods. <sup>17</sup>For it was the Lord, our God, who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery. He performed those great miracles before our very eyes and protected us along our entire journey and among the peoples through whom we passed. <sup>18b</sup>Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God." *The Word of the Lord.*

### **Responsorial Psalm**

**Psalm 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21**

**"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."**

<sup>2</sup>I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. <sup>3</sup>Let my soul glory in the Lord; the lowly will hear me and be glad.

**R.**

<sup>16</sup>The Lord has eyes for the just, and ears for their cry.

<sup>17</sup>The Lord confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

**R.**

<sup>18</sup>When the just cry out, the Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them. <sup>19</sup>The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

**R.** <sup>20</sup>Many are the troubles of the just one, but out of them all the Lord delivers him; <sup>21</sup>he watches over all his bones; not one of them shall be broken.

**R.**

## 2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:21-32

Brothers and sisters: <sup>21</sup>Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup>Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. <sup>24</sup>As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her <sup>26</sup>to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body.

<sup>31</sup>*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*

<sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. *The Word of the Lord.*

**Alleluia** (John 6:63, 68)

**Lector:** Alleluia, Alleluia. **All:** Alleluia, Alleluia.

**Lector:** <sup>63</sup>Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; <sup>68</sup>you have the words of everlasting life.

**All:** Alleluia, Alleluia.

## Gospel Reading: John 6:60-69

<sup>60</sup>Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?"

<sup>61</sup>Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? <sup>62</sup>What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. <sup>65</sup>And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

<sup>66</sup>As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. <sup>67</sup>Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>We have come to

believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”  
***The Gospel of the Lord.***

### Re: The First Reading

Joshua (a variant of the name *Jesus*) was the successor of Moses. He led the Israelites to the Promised Land of Canaan. However, after some years in the Promised Land, the Israelites became lax in their faith. There were those who, out of nostalgia, were tempted to worship the gods “beyond the River” (24:15), meaning their distant ancestors’ gods, from before Abraham and Sarah. There were those who were tempted to worship “the gods of the Amorites” (24:15), meaning the gods of their current non-Jewish neighbors, out of convenience, as doing so would ease their acceptance as foreigners.

And so, just before he died, Joshua boldly summons all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, a spiritual center, for a “taking stock of their faith.” When Joshua asks them to commit to the god they will serve, the people immediately respond that they will not forsake the Lord. The Lord had led them out of slavery, performed miracles, and protected them on their journey to the Promised Land. They are grateful and remain loyal to the Lord while living in the land of other gods.

*The foregoing reminds us that by our baptism, God has rescued us from the slavery of sin, given us the hope of eternal life, and guided us along right paths. **Alternate paths may be easier or more socially acceptable, but our moral conscience tells us that these are not the values that will lead us to our eternal home.***

### Re: The Second Reading

- 1) *Subordination.* The first verse refers to Christians. All are to look up to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- 2) *Thus, also husbands and wives are to look up to one another.* Christ’s relationship to the Church is the model. Christ is to the Church, Paul says, as husbands are to their wives: Christ is the groom and the Church is his bride. Just as Christ came to serve and give his life to save and beautify the Church, so should the husband do to his wife. In the same way, the love and service that the Church (bride) gives to Christ (groom) should be reflected in the way the wife loves and serves her husband.

In short, married love involves commitment and mutuality. Husbands and wives should nourish and cherish each other as Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church.

### Re: The Gospel

For five weeks now our gospel has been from the sixth chapter of St. John. The final section of the chapter, which is today’s gospel, focuses on the response of the disciples to Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse.

Many of Jesus’ disciples found the teaching too difficult to accept and walked away from him. The fact that Jesus let the people leave, knowing that they understood him literally, is a strong proof that this is the way that he wants us to understand him when he says, “this is my body—this is the chalice of my blood.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Peter and the rest of the apostles didn’t understand what Jesus was saying any better than those who were leaving Jesus. What Peter had which those who were leaving did not have was FAITH as he said on behalf of the Twelve Apostles: “*We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.*”

\*\*\*\*\*

Today’s gospel further shows that when Jesus speaks of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he is not speaking of his human body but of his glorious body. For that reason, his response to those who murmured was: “*Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life.*” Jesus’ transfigured and resurrected body is present in a real sense in the Eucharist.

\*\*\*\*\*

There are teachings in our faith and Church that are sometimes “hard” and we are tempted to ask “*Who can accept it?*” In many ways today Jesus asks the same question: “*Do you also want to leave?*” With that question, Jesus wants to make clear that to follow him one must have real or genuine FAITH. Today’s liturgy challenges us to remain faithful to the teachings of our faith *even when we find them hard and are tempted to say, “who can accept it?”*

\*\*\*\*\*

Today’s gospel also shows that even among those people who were with Jesus and saw what he did and heard what he said, some or many of them went away unconvinced. It is not a case that those who were actually there had an advantage over those who encounter Jesus centuries later. **Following Jesus is not about first hand knowledge of the subject matter. It is about believing that Jesus has the words of eternal life.**



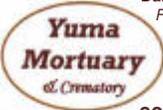
A man was robbing a bank and as he stood at the teller’s window with a gun in his hands, his mask fell off. He quickly put it back on and turned to a man who was a bank customer and asked him, “Did you see my face?” The man said “yes, I saw you.” And so the robber shot him. Then he turned to a couple who were standing nearby and said to the wife, “Did you see my face?” The wife said “No, I didn’t see you. But my husband did.”

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