

*faith*FULL Food Drive 2018

Tips for Preachers

Sunday, March 18, Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year B and Year A options included)

Gospel (Year B): John 12:20-33

Key Quote: "The Father will honor whoever serves me."

- Jesus makes it clear in this passage that disciples of his will be people of service to God and neighbor, reaching out with compassion to those who are suffering.
- The *faith*FULL Food Drive is just one small way we live out our call as disciples.
- When we come together to feed the hungry, we act as Jesus did.
- Cardinal Timothy Dolan is fond of referring to our call to care for "the —uns":
 - the unemployed,
 - the uninsured,
 - the unwanted,
 - the unwed mother,
 - the innocent, fragile unborn baby in her womb,
 - the undocumented,
 - the un-housed,
 - the unhealthy,
 - the unfed,
 - the undereducated.
- As our Lenten journey of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving nears its end, our Sunday today is marked by a special communal almsgiving that we offer in hopes that all people will have access to the "daily bread" they need to good lives.

See reverse side for Year A (Scrutinies) option

Gospel (Year A; Scrutinies): John 11:1-45

Key Quote: "And Jesus wept."

- Jesus is overcome with sorrow upon the death of his friend, Lazarus.
- We believe that God is with us in a similar way when we are suffering: Comforting us, weeping right beside us.
- God really does have a special care and love for those who are hurting, whether in body, mind, or spirit.
- In the story, Jesus draws near Martha and Mary in the midst of their suffering.
- This physical movement toward those in pain is an example of *compassion*, a word that literally means "to suffer with another."
- Instead of avoiding the suffering, Jesus moves toward it.
- A beautiful reflection on compassion is offered by the great spiritual writer Henri Nouwen in his book *Compassion*. He writes:

"The word 'compassion' is derived from the Latin. The verb 'pati' is to suffer and 'cum' means with, giving a literal translation to suffer with. Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable and powerless with the powerless.

Compassion is not a bending towards the underprivileged from a privileged position; it is not a reaching out from on high to those who are less fortunate below; it is not a gesture of sympathy, or pity, for those who fail to make it in the upward pull. On the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there."

- This is an appropriate theme for the *faithFULL* Food Drive today, as it is one way we are able to practice compassion during this Lenten season. We reach out in love toward the many people in our region who are suffering from hunger and food insecurity. Our message is that we will care for them always, inspired by Jesus' own example.