



Living in the Spirit
◆ **31st Sunday of Ordinary Time**

Call to Prayer and Sharing

❖ *Invitation to Prayer - Leader*

Let us begin,
Now, here in this place
With a moment of silence
to reflect,
to focus,
to be attentive to ourselves,
to one another,
and to the presence of Christ.

May the Lord come and increase our faith. (*reflective pause*)

❖ *Opening Song - If time allows, sing a familiar hymn or song.*

❖ *Then: "In the name of the Father and of the Son"*

The Word of God

❖ *Leader:* Let us welcome God's Word into our hearts.

All: Fill our minds that we may hear your wisdom.
Touch our lips that we may speak your truth.
Hold in our hearts that we may always follow you.
Come now, O Word of God.

From Matthew 23: 1 – 12 (The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees)

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.'

As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven.

Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Christ.

The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

The Word of the Lord...

❖ *At the conclusion of the reading, briefly pause for quiet reflection.*

Faith Sharing/Question of the Week (*consider sharing on either question*)

❖ **Adult:** In what circumstances do you separate what you believe from how you behave?

❖ **Mixed Ages:** What opportunities we have this week to show your face to others?

Time is provided for sharing responses to the question. Silence between responses is to be expected. Allow a few minutes for faith sharing. For larger groups, leader invites members to divide into groups of 3 or 4 for faith sharing.

❖ *When the sharing comes to an end, the leader invites everyone to take a moment to silently and reverently hold what has been shared together.*

Litany of Faith

Leader: Christ Jesus,
There is no master, no one to follow but you alone.
Keep us on the path toward you.

All: My portion and cup, it is you that I claim for my prize.

Leader: Christ Jesus,
You humble us to remember that we are to be servants.
Keep us on the path toward you.

All: My portion and cup, it is you that I claim for my prize.

Leader: Christ Jesus,
You stir hearts, and we recommit ourselves to your mission.
Keep us on the path toward you.

All: My portion and cup, it is you that I claim for my prize.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together:

All: Gracious God,
we know that you are with us here,
and we have taken your Word into our hearts.
You call us all to conversion,
we who are here in this place,
and we who are now ready to welcome you into our lives.
We are ready,
we are willing,
and we are yours.
So we surrender to you
our aches and longings into one as we pray:
Our Father...

Continue with the Meeting

Final Blessing

Leader: Now let us bless one another:

All: May God bless and keep us, may God smile upon us.
May God show us kindness, fill us with peace.
And may God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
may we always love and serve,
filled with God's Peace. Amen.

Leader: *Conclude the meeting or sing a closing song.*

Reflection Question to take home for the week: How has this Word touched or challenged my understanding of God? About faith? About the Church?