



## TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JESUS ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING ITS SHAME, AND HAS TAKEN HIS SEAT AT THE RIGHT OF THE THRONE OF GOD.

Hebrews 12:2

August 18, 2013

~ Parish Life and Activities... ~

### THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Today's responsorial psalm, Psalm 40, is more familiar to us with the refrain "Here am I, Lord." This "Here am I" is Jeremiah's great prophetic response to God's call. But today's story of Jeremiah and the refrain "Lord, come to my aid!" remind us that there are always two sides to following the call of God. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews knew this, too. He reminded his readers that even weighted down with burdens and sins, we can still persevere by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, who himself knew the shame and pain of the cross, but saw beyond it to the joy of sitting at the right of the throne of God. Jesus himself gave the disciples a "sneak preview" of a baptism that would not be as wondrous as the one in the Jordan that inaugurated his ministry, but would be one of fire and anguish. Today's words from scripture may not be terribly soothing, but in their honesty and strength we can acknowledge the difficulties of daily discipleship, and take comfort in the assurance of our own salvation in Christ.

### VISITING MISSIONARY

Today we welcome Fr. Christopher, a representative of the Archdiocese of Ibadan, Nigeria, here on behalf of the Missionary Cooperative Plan. This annual appeal helps unite the Archdiocese of L.A. with the Universal Church and to animate mission awareness among the people of our Archdiocese.

### PERMANENT DEACON MINISTRY GROWING

EXCERPTS FROM A REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS —The number of permanent deacons in the United States continues to increase, according to a national survey released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) conducted the survey of 193 of the 195 U.S. dioceses in April. This marks the seventh CARA survey of the permanent diaconate, an ancient ministry reinstated by the Second Vatican Council. The bishops began to ordain permanent deacons for the United States in the early seventies. The ministry emphasizes roles in liturgy, preaching and service. Currently there are more than 18,000 deacons, about 3,000 of them retired. Ninety-three percent of active deacons are currently married; four percent are widowers, and two percent never married. "The statistics are encouraging," said Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, chair of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. "But they also alert us to the fact many of the deacons will soon reach retirement age. This suggests a need for bishops to recruit a greater number of men to join the ranks of the permanent diaconate."

Ninety-five percent of active deacons are at least 50 years old. About a quarter are in their fifties; 43 percent are in their sixties; and 25 percent are 70 or older. Almost 90 percent of dioceses have a minimum age for deacon candidacy and half have a mandatory retirement age. In the U.S. the minimum age for ordination to the permanent diaconate is 35. The average minimum age for acceptance into a diaconate program is 33. Thirteen percent of dioceses have a mandatory retirement age of 70. Eighty percent mandate retirement at 75. Seventy-eight percent of active deacons are white. Fifteen percent are Hispanic or Latino, Three percent are African American and three percent are Asian. Many permanent deacons hold jobs outside of the ministry in such areas as sales, law or other work. An estimated 21 percent of active permanent deacons are also compensated for ministry. Some serve in full-time ministry, for example in parishes or diocesan positions. Others are compensated for hospital or prison ministry. A small percentage of deacons are entrusted with full-time pastoral care of a parish and others work in a social services agency. Almost 30 percent of permanent deacons hold a graduate degree, about two-thirds of them in a field not related to the diaconate. Three in ten (31 percent) have a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. Almost 20 percent have some college education and another fifth have a high school degree. Eighty-five percent of deacons are required to undergo post-ordination formation. The median number of hours is 20 per year. About 74 percent of dioceses also provide formation opportunities for wives of deacons.

### REFLECTIONS

#### THE 21ST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

**First Reading:** Isaiah 66:18-21 **Second Reading:** Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

**Gospel:** Luke 13:22-30

Jesus tells us to try to enter through the narrow gate. What choices am I making in my life that will allow me to be recognized at the doorway of heaven?