

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

October 25, 2026

Readings

Ex 22:20-26

Ps 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

1 Thes 1:5c-10

Mt 22:34-40

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Let us remember where we have come from and let us respect and care for those who have come after us.

He was about 23 years old when he came across the sea to this land. He traveled with his young wife, their one-year-old daughter and his mother-in-law. A few months after they arrived, the little girl died. They were blessed with other children. The first was a son, who became the oldest of nine children. This man was a skilled worker, a stone mason. Even though he was without documents, he was able to find stable work that provided for his family. However, he often had to be away from his family for a week at a time because of the need to go where the work was. Given the demands of work, he never became fluent in the language of his new land. Therefore, as his son became older, and quickly learned the language, he served as the interpreter for both his dad and mom. The man was my grandfather Angelo, who later became known as “Maestro Angelo” because he was a master stone mason. His first-born son was my dad, Gaetano, “Tony,” who became the oldest of nine children born in the U.S.

In the first reading today from the Book of Exodus, we hear the words: “Thus says the Lord: ‘You shall not molest or oppress the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.’” Lawrence, Massachusetts is known as the “Immigrant City.” In the mid-19th century

through the first years of the 20th century, given the development of the textile industry in the city, there were waves of new immigrants coming into the city. First there were the French Canadians and the Irish. Then came the Italians, the Polish and the Lebanese. Each nationality that arrived experienced discrimination, humiliation and injustice. Sadly, they experienced these not only from those who had lived in the city for generations, but also from the nationality, or nationalities, who had arrived before them. The “immigrant ladder” was the concept used to describe the discrimination, humiliation and injustice that each succeeding group of immigrants received from previous groups. As each group went up the ladder, they looked down on those who followed. How easy it is to forget our own story. Let us remember where we came from and let us respect and care for those who have come after us.

Some years ago, at a first penance service, a little one read the following petition: “Dear God, help us to think of the consequences before we choose to do something, and please help us to try to do your will.” At the end of the first reading the Lord says, I will hear those who cry out, “for I am compassionate.” This is echoed in St. Luke’s Gospel, where the Lord Jesus says: “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.” (Lk 6:6) The Lord then goes on to say: “For the measure you measure with will be measured back to you.” (Lk 6:38c) Those of us who are first, second, third generation, or later descendants of earlier immigrants, hopefully will remember where we came from, and will respect and care for those who have come after us. Please, Lord, help us to think of the consequences, even the dire consequences described in the first reading, before we choose to do something, and please help us to do your will.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus proclaims: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The

second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” (Mt. 22:37-40) In the Encyclical Letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV makes the distinction between the construction of the Tower of Babel (cf. Gen 11 :1-9) and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah after the Babylonian Exile (cf. Neh 2-6). Pope Leo says: “Like Nehemiah, let us pray, plan wisely and work perseveringly, placing God at the forefront of our actions and the human person at the center of our choices. Thus, the ‘rejected stones’ – the poor, the sick, the migrants and the least among us – will become the cornerstone, and a solid welcoming home will emerge on earth, where love and fruitfulness will finally meet, and righteousness and peace will embrace (cf. Psalm 85:10).”

[#16]

In #53 of *Magnifica Humanitas*, there is the following statement: “The dignity of every person can be described as infinite, as Saint Pope John Paul II stated, for two reasons: first, because the love of God, who calls us to friendship with him, is infinite; and second, his love is absolutely unconditional, in the sense that, even if we search endlessly, we will never find anything that can erase or deny it.” Touching each of her five fingers one at a time, St. Teresa of Calcutta would simply say: “You did it for Me,” to remind herself, and us, of the Lord’s words about the Last Judgment in Matthew 25: “For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me.... I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, **you did it for me.**” (Mt 25:35-37, 40) Recognizing the dignity of every human being, she would encourage her sisters, and all of us, to give ourselves: to silence, prayer, faith, love, and service to all those in need, including our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Let us remember where we came from and let us respect and care for those who have come after us.

On August 2, 1932, the east wing of the Villanova Monastery was burned to the ground. My grandfather, Maestro Angelo, was one of the stone masons who rebuilt that wing of the monastery where I now live. As I come down a well-lit stairway whose west wall is made of magnificent stones, I touch some of the stones and wonder if my grandfather Angelo was the one who put them in place. I call to mind Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. I thank God for all the ways he is using us, living stones, to rebuild his world and his church. By God's grace in the Gift of the Holy Spirit, let us affirm the dignity of every human being. Let us always remember where we have come from and respect and care for those who have come after us.