

October 31, 2021

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time



VISIONS

Are You Up to the Challenge?

On your way into school today, you find a \$100 in an envelope on the sidewalk.

Read the note and follow the directions below and steps 1-5.

Congratulations! You have seven days to spend one hundred dollars. There are two rules: First, you must use the money to help a neighbor. Second, you can spend it however you think best, but it must be spent by this time next week.



1 Think of someone who could use some help or a problem that needs to be fixed.

2 What can you do to help?

3 How will you spend the money?

4 Besides the money, what else can you do to help?

5 How will you know that you have made a difference?

NO COMMANDMENT GREATER THAN THESE

On a clear fall morning in 2001, firehouse alarms began ringing all over New York City.

At Hook & Ladder Company 8, firefighters sprang into action, just as they always did when the alarm sounded. Lieutenant Vincent Halloran quickly suited up in his protective gear and climbed onto the truck, along with his fellow first responders. Their destination was the World Trade Center, about twelve blocks away.

Vincent had worked as a firefighter for twenty years, but it's likely he had never seen anything like what he saw on the morning of September 11, 2001. The 110-story Twin Towers had been the targets of terrorist attacks. Two jumbo jets had been hijacked and flown directly into the towers, sending massive fireballs into the upper floors.

Tens of thousands of people worked in the two buildings, and since it was after 9:00 a.m. on a workday, Vincent and the other firefighters knew that many thousands of people were trapped inside.

For Vincent and the other firefighters, only one thing mattered: saving lives. The firefighters didn't hesitate. Vincent led them into the North Tower to begin the rescue work.

It isn't surprising that Vincent took this heroic

action. Known to friends and family as Vinny, he is described as someone who was always laughing and smiling, and who always went the extra mile, even for strangers.

Vinny Halloran had grown up in Flushing, New York, where he attended St. Kevin's Catholic Academy for grade school and then St. Francis Preparatory School for high school. Now at forty-three, he and his wife, Marie, had five sons, and they were expecting their sixth child the following spring.

Vinny liked to take his family fishing, boating, and swimming. He always told his kids they could invite a friend along on their camping trips and other activities. Every summer, Vinny and Marie welcomed children from Ireland to stay with the family. Vinny cared about everyone.



Vinny Halloran loved outdoor activities with his family.

Although it is impossible to know everything that happened inside the World Trade Center on September 11, it is known that Vinny had made it to the thirtieth floor of the North Tower when an order came from his company to leave immediately. The South Tower had collapsed, and it couldn't be long before the other tower would fall.

The firefighters from Company 8 made it out of the building, but Vinny did not. "He probably stopped to help someone," says Vinny's lifelong friend and fellow firefighter Larry Mack, who calls it a "last act of compassion."



Vinny's daughter, Phelan, points to a picture of her dad at a memorial service in 2004.

Vinny's compassion and willingness to serve others did not die on September 11. At his memorial Mass two months later, Vinny's sons Jake, Conor, Aidan, and Kieran could have chosen to sit with their family in the pew. That would have been understandable for the boys. Instead, like their dad, they served others. They volunteered to help at the Mass as altar servers.

Today, twenty years later, the Halloran children have grown up, but if they feel sorry for themselves, they don't seem to show it.

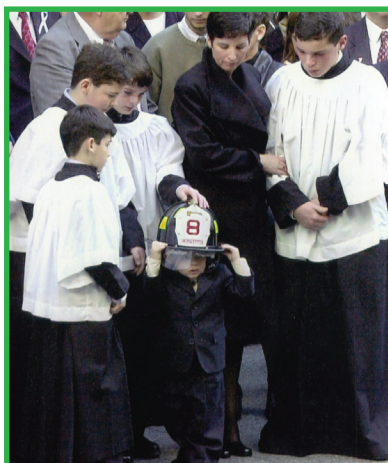
Declan was two years old when his dad died. "It took me a while to understand that my dad was dead and gone," he says. "There are so many factors that would be different if he were alive. My dad was never around to watch any soccer games or baseball games or basketball games. It just became the normal."

Phelan is the youngest. She is the baby the Hallorans had been expecting when Vinny died. She was born on Vinny and Marie's wedding anniversary, May 17, 2002. "When I was a kid, I always knew that my dad wasn't there," she says. "I hear all these stories about how I'm like him, but I never got to have the memories."

It is easy to see how the Halloran children have inherited their dad's strength, compassion, and joy. In an interview, Phelan tells a story about a father-daughter dance she didn't attend when she was

in fourth grade. But the next year, she changed her mind. "I realized I could go if I wanted to. And I wanted to, because there was an ice-cream bar!" she says. "I decided to call one of my brothers and ask if he wanted to go." Phelan's older brother took her to the dance, and she smiles as she remembers the fun they had together. "Up until that point there was an empty hole," she says, "and I just realized that it doesn't have to be empty anymore."

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the events of September 11. It's important to remember the terrible things that happened on that day, and the thousands of lives that were lost. But it is also important to remember the heroes who chose to follow the two parts of Jesus' Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other



Vinny's sons Jake, Conor, Aidan, and Kieran serve at his memorial Mass on November 9, 2001.

Vinny and his wife, Marie, and their five sons. Their sixth child, a girl, was born several months after 9/11.



commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

Vinny Halloran saved countless lives throughout his career and especially on September 11. An estimated 17,400 people are now known to have been working in the World Trade Center buildings that day, and 87 percent of them were safely evacuated, helped by heroes like Vinny who were willing and prepared to go into the most dangerous of situations to save them.

You can visit a living memorial to Vincent Halloran and all those whose lives were lost on September 11, 2001 at voicescenter.org/living-memorial. We also can celebrate their memory by choosing to love God and others as they did. How will you celebrate their memory today?

TALK

- 1 How is loving and serving others a way to love God?
- 2 How does Vincent Halloran show his love in his daily life and on 9/11?
- 3 What are some ways his children carried on his compassion?
- 4 How do you visualize yourself serving others?



SUNDAY GOSPEL

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 12:28b-34

Jesus' Great Commandment

Narrator: This Gospel begins when a teacher of the Law challenges Jesus to answer a question about the Law of Moses, which contained 613 **commandments**.

Teacher of the Law: Which is the greatest of the commandments?

Jesus: This is the first: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone. Therefore, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." And this is the second: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

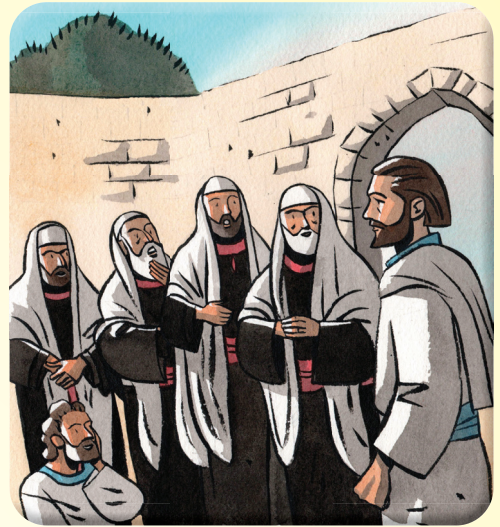
No other commandment is greater than these.

Teacher of the Law: What a great teacher you are! You are right, "The Lord alone is God; there is no other." Yes, "to love the Lord with all our hearts, and all our minds, and all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves"—this is worth more than making burnt offerings or sacrifices of animals.

Narrator: Jesus approved of these wise words.

Jesus: You are not far from the Kingdom of God.

Narrator: No one else dared to ask Jesus any more questions.



TALK

- 1 How close is the teacher of the Law to the reign of God?
- 2 What are ways to keep the Great Commandment?
- 3 How does the way Vincent Halloran lived inspire you to live the Great Commandment?



and DOCTRINE

Connecting GOSPEL

Who Are Our Neighbors?

Jesus' words and actions show us who we are and how we are to live. Jesus shows us how to live the Great Commandment, how to love God, and how to love one another as ourselves.

As we grow, we are able to live in a wider circle of friends who may include

people not like us—people whose ideas and feelings are different from our own.

Jesus calls us to make God's love visible in our lives by recognizing all people as our neighbors and as God's friends. It is then that we live the spirit of the commandments (CCC, 2054).

TALK

- 1 We often make friends with people who share our same interests. Do you have friends who are different from you? What do you like best about those friendships?
- 2 When Jesus says, "Love your neighbor," you likely think of those who live near you. Who else is your neighbor? List them, and then compare your list with a partner. Then make a class list.

Catholic FAITH WORD +

COMMANDMENTS

These are laws from God. The Ten Commandments were the divine laws revealed to Moses and the People of Israel that describe our relationship and duties to God, others, and ourselves.



After reading this Sunday's Gospel, you might wonder: Do we still have to follow the Ten Commandments? Turn to pages 32–34 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* to review the Ten Commandments. Then turn to pages 35–36 to see how the New Law—Jesus' law of love—fulfills the Old Law.

The People of Israel Give Us a Creed

Slogans, mottoes, and creeds are kinds of sayings that tell us important ideas in ways that are easy to remember.

Slogans state the main purpose or benefit of a product in advertisements. They tell us the goals of groups who work for peace or against abortion. A motto states the main characteristic of groups such as clubs, classes, teams, countries. Here are some examples of slogans and mottoes:

- In God we trust.
- Be prepared.
- Just do it!
- Respect life.

Like slogans and mottoes, creeds express main, important ideas. A creed states the most basic beliefs of a religion. The Nicene Creed we proclaim at Mass on Sundays is longer than a slogan, but it summarizes all of our beliefs as Catholics. The Sign of the Cross is a short prayer, but it proclaims our belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit every time we pray it—like a creed.

In both the First Reading and the Gospel Reading this Sunday, we hear one of Israel's oldest, most often prayed creeds:

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. Therefore, love the LORD your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.





Deuteronomy 6:4-5



Jewish people call the first part of this passage the Sh'ma (pronounced *sheh-mah*). The Sh'ma tells us Israel's most basic belief—the Lord our God is Lord alone. Jews also have another way to say this prayer: the Lord our God is one.

The ancient Jews taught us to believe in one God and not the many gods of other cultures. Jewish people express their belief in one God whenever they pray the *Sh'ma*—in the morning, at night, and on the Sabbath. Jewish people pray the *Sh'ma* frequently, similar to how Catholics pray the Sign of the Cross frequently.

The rest of the Scripture passage tells us how to love God. We are to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. These words form the slogan that King Josiah ordered preached 600 years before Jesus. They are the main message of the Book of Deuteronomy, which was found in the Temple in King Josiah's reign.

Write on the lines at right ways you can love God with your heart , strength , mind , and soul .



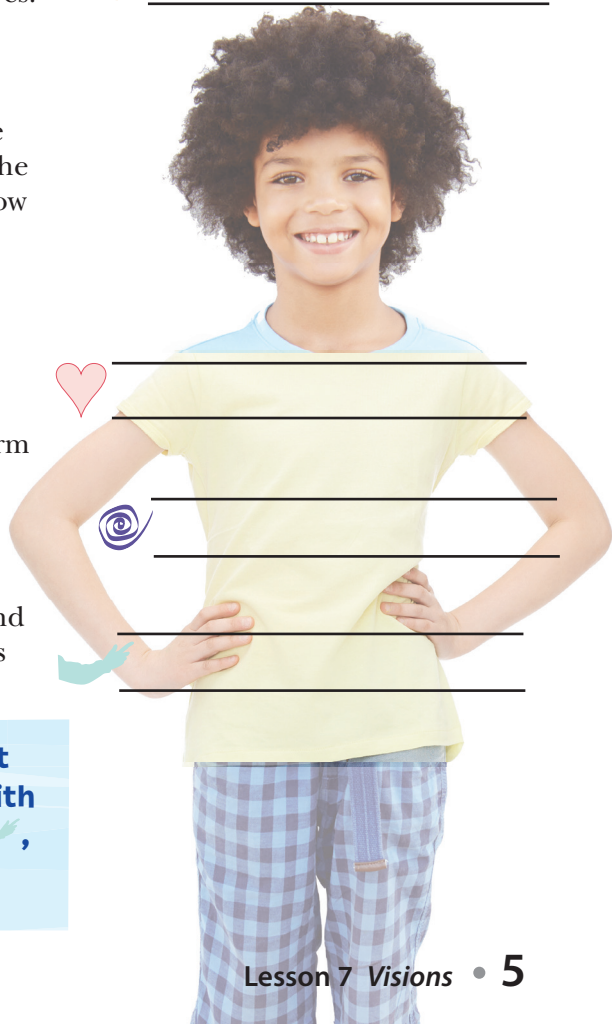
In Jerusalem, a boy celebrates his *bar mitzvah*. Now he can read from the Torah scroll and lead the congregation in prayer.











Explore Points of View

Different people can have different thoughts and feelings about the same person or event. Take a look at the difference a point of view makes. Read these two accounts about the same person.

His mother became pregnant with him by the Holy Spirit. He was born in a barn and spent his infancy as a refugee. As an adult, he never held a full-time job nor had a permanent address. He wandered either homeless, or he stayed with friends.

He spent a lot of his time eating and drinking with people from the wrong side of the tracks. He called himself a teacher but followed no established teaching method. Instead, he told riddles, which few people understood, even his closest friends.

Political leaders branded him a troublemaker. Religious leaders branded him a heretic. One of his friends spied on him and betrayed him for money. Most of the rest of his friends deserted him when he ran into trouble with the law. Even his right-hand man disowned him.

At his trial, he represented himself, lost the case, and received the death

sentence. His execution took place immediately with hardly any protest. He was buried in a borrowed grave.



Describe the viewpoint of this account.



I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into Heaven; and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Describe the viewpoint of this account. _____

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. The word *as* means "the same way" or "like." Jesus commands us to treat others the same way we want to be treated. Jesus' command challenges us to learn about others' thoughts and feelings and respect them in action.

Work in twos or threes to explore the viewpoints of the characters in the stories on page 7. Use your imagination. Practice understanding how each person might feel and think.

“I’d Just Die if My Mother . . .”

Nicole arrives late for play practice on Thursday. She slips into an auditorium seat behind her friends Maria and Jess and watches her speech teacher explain the layout of the set. Nicole notices her mother holding up a freshly painted tree for the set and talking with three kids about it.

Nicole’s mother helps out at school whenever she can. She is good at art and agrees to help paint scenery and sets for the eighth-grade play, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Nicole overhears Maria say, “I’d just die if my mother came to school every day like Mrs. Walberg does!”

“My mother probably wouldn’t help even if she didn’t work so late. For sure she wouldn’t wear an outfit like that!” Susan answers.

Just then the speech teacher faces the auditorium seats and calls, “Nicole?”

“I’m here,” she says, stands up, and waves her arm.

Maria and Jess turn around and gasp in surprise.

What are the thoughts and feelings of each person?

Maria _____

Jess _____

Nicole _____

How would you feel in Nicole’s place? _____

Whose Reputation Is It Anyway?

The Janowitz family has three boys. Justin Janowitz is in ninth grade, and Rick is in seventh. Their older brother, Brian, is a high school junior. Brian and two other boys are caught shoplifting at the mall and have to complete one hundred hours of community service before school starts.

Justin doesn’t tell any of his friends about Brian. Rick figures most people think Brian has a summer job mowing lawns around city hall. The Janowitz family goes to counseling to learn how to help one another get through the crisis. Brian makes some new friends and gets a fresh start.

On the first day of school, Justin and Rick discover their friends know about Brian. A neighbor told another family, and one of their kids spread the news. When Justin walks to his chair in band, one of the trombone players whispers, “Hey, I hear your big brother’s got sticky fingers!” When Rick shows up for soccer practice, a teammate asks him if Brian is still in jail.

At supper that night, the two boys tell the family what happened.



Explore each person’s point of view. How will each boy feel? What will they be thinking?

Justin _____

Rick _____

Brian _____

How would you feel if Brian were your brother? _____



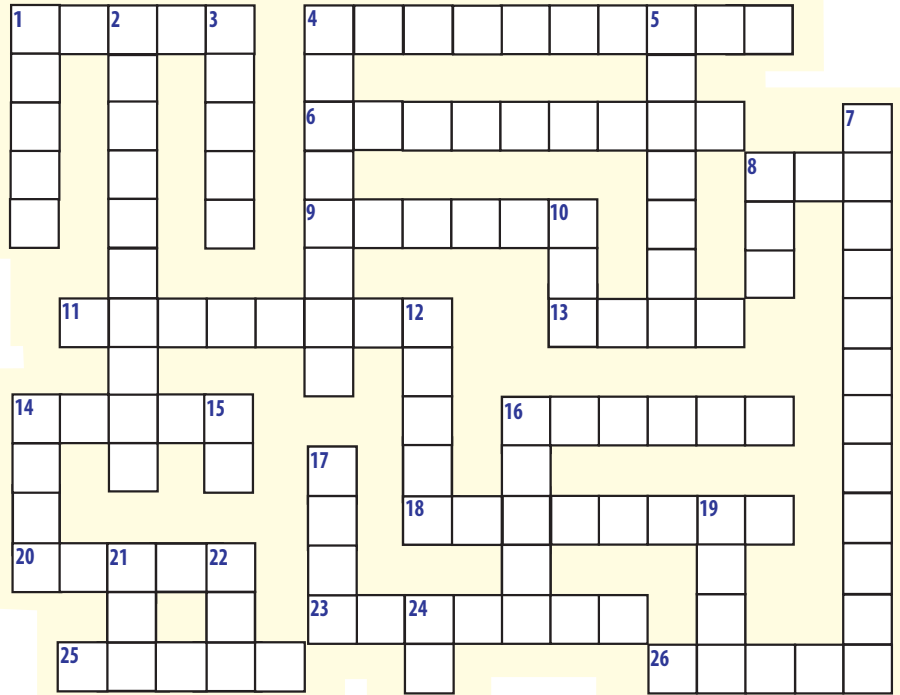
There is no closer union with Jesus than when you receive him in the Eucharist. You too can say with St. Paul, “. . . and the life I now live is not my own but Christ is living in me.”

—Rev. Msgr. Richard L. Carroll, V.F.



Review Mark's Gospel

Complete the crossword puzzle by filling in the words that are missing from the verses in Mark's Gospel below. If you get stuck, look up the verses in a Bible from the Sunday Gospels in the last six *Visions* lessons.



ACROSS

- 1 _____ wrote this law for you because you are so stubborn. (10:5)
- 4 _____ threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus. (10:50)
- 6 Some _____ came to Jesus and tried to test him. (10:2)
- 8 _____, then, can be saved? (10:26)
- 9 Hear, O _____! (12:29)
- 11 When he heard Jesus of _____ was walking by, he began to shout. (10:47)
- 13 Go, your faith has made you _____. (10:52)
- 14 You are not far from the _____ of God. (12:34)
- 16 Go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor and come and _____ me. (10:21)
- 18 Love your _____ as yourself. (12:31)
- 20 Therefore, love the Lord your God with all your _____. (12:30)
- 23 Good _____, what must I do to receive eternal life? (10:17)
- 25 Tell us, does our law _____ a man to divorce his wife? (10:2)
- 26 Cheer up! Get up. _____ is calling you. (10:49)

DOWN

- 1 Have _____ on me! (10:48)
- 2 Jesus! _____! Have mercy on me! (10:48)
- 3 Those who want to be great must _____ the rest. (9:35)
- 4 Can you be _____ in the way I must be baptized? (10:38)
- 5 And in the age to come they will receive _____ life. (10:30)
- 7 Which is the greatest of the _____? (12:28)
- 8 _____ do you call me good? (10:18)
- 10 What _____ did Moses give you? (10:3)
- 12 Therefore, no _____ being should separate what God has joined together. (10:9)
- 14 How hard it will be for _____ people to enter the Kingdom of God. (10:23)
- 15 You are right, "The Lord alone is God. There is _____ other." (12:32)
- 16 Go, your _____ has made you well. (10:52)
- 17 Teacher, I _____ to see. (10:51)
- 19 At _____, Bartimaeus was able to see and followed Jesus on the road. (10:52)
- 21 Go and sell _____ you have and give the money to the poor. (10:21)
- 22 They are no longer _____, but one flesh. (10:8)
- 24 Love your neighbor _____ yourself. (12:31)

Answers are in the Teaching Guide.

With My Family and Friends

Scan here for parent resources or go to gospelweeklies.com/family



Pray
Help

me, Jesus, to not get caught up in my busyness and forget to put you first. Amen.



Think
How does

Jesus show you by example how you can live out the Great Commandment of loving God and neighbor?



Act

Pay attention carefully during Mass and try to find an example of loving God and loving others in the prayers and readings.