



January 28, 2024

## Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dt 18:15-20 | 1 Cor 7:32-35 | Mk 1:21-28

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

### **GROW** AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Oh, to not be anxious! What would that be like – to not have to worry about how we'll pay the bills or whether our kids are safe or if our health will fail? While anxiety is a very human emotion, we can take comfort in knowing that our God is more powerful than anything that may worry us. It is also important to note that in today's reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, what he means by "anxious" is not a modern psychological concept with only a negative connotation. The connotation is more "to be concerned with," or "caring about" something, and can refer to things that are very good – including spouses and families! But when we care for many things, including our relationship with God, it is only natural for us to be anxious at times. But Jesus Christ gives us the assurance that the troubles of this world are temporary, and the peace of God eternal. Paul is encouraging the Corinthians, and us, to understand the importance of an undivided devotion to God, to care for him above all things – no matter if we are married or single – so that our whole life is devoted to holiness.

### **GO** EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I am always thankful when something good that has been anticipated, or predicted, comes to pass: The sunshine and mild weather holds true for that outdoor event I hosted; or the generous gift that a longtime friend mailed arrives unscathed. There is some anxiety in the waiting for, but relief in the fulfillment of, these beneficent promises. And while these are somewhat superficial examples, they do point us in the same direction of hope and gratitude that the divine gifts of God elicit in us. In today's first reading, Moses promises the people that the Lord will raise up for them, from among their own kin, a prophet who will speak God's own words and to whom the people will listen. And the Lord did provide numerous prophets, and kings, and judges, and eventually his only begotten Son, to call his people back to himself, and to save them from the wages of sin and death. The hope and anticipation God's chosen people had was fulfilled in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We share in that gift of hope and of gratitude for our salvation.

**PRAY** Today's psalm (Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9) is a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving and encouragement. It helps us steer our minds from those things which may make us anxious. Spend time in the morning or evening each day of the coming week, praying and reflecting on the words.