

When children and parents have faith discussions regularly, faith multiplies.



Faith at Home

Theme of the Sunday: Gospel of Mark / Discipleship

Verse of the Sunday: "He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons." Gospel of Mark 3:13-15

Message/Moral of the day: Mark is the shortest and most action-packed gospel. The story starts with enthusiasm as John the Baptist preaches in the wilderness. Jesus comes to be baptized and the heavens are ripped open at the sound of the Father's voice. Mark takes us from scene to scene, healing to healing, miracle to miracle. The first half of the gospel (Ch. 1-8) depicts the Galilean ministry of Jesus. He gathers disciples, works many miracles and shows Himself to be the Messiah. Yet His messianic identity is to remain a secret until his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The second half of the gospel depicts only a week's worth of time, but what a week it is! Jesus enters the Temple to the people's acclamation; He teaches and heals. Then He institutes the Holy Communion during the Passover meal, is arrested, tried, tortured and crucified. He rises on the third day as He had predicted and astonishes the disciples.

An extremely important theme in Mark's gospel is discipleship. Discipleship involves not only learning from the teacher, but also developing a personal relationship with him. Jesus seeks out His own disciples and calls them to follow Him. He then sends them out to carry on his work. (3:14; 6:7) Mark displays the weaknesses and failures of the disciples. Mark focuses on the disciples' ability or inability to see, hear and understand who Jesus is (4:12; 6:52; 7:14; 8:17-8). He even tells how they abandoned Jesus in His hour of need.

Faith at Home:

- Each of us who believes in Jesus is called His disciple.
- We are carrying on Jesus' work by being together in Church and Sunday School and learning His teachings on Sunday,
- We execute our Faith by practicing what we learn during the week!

Prayer & Worship: Heavenly Father, Good and Gracious God, Your Son and our Lord Jesus Christ, invites all people to follow him and become his disciples. Touch our hearts, enlighten our minds, and stir our spirit. Help us daily to take up our cross and follow him; by living his Word and proclaiming his Good News to those around us. Amen.

Liturgical Calendar: **The Holy Cross of Varak** takes its name from the Mountain of Varak in Armenia. It is a relic of our Lord's wooden cross, upon which He was crucified. In the 4th century, a devoted and very beautiful Christian nun named St. Hripsime was running for her life. The Emperor, Diocletian, had ordered his Roman soldiers to capture all Christians. So Hripsime fled to Armenia and during her escape, she buried a piece of the true cross in the crevice of a rock in the mountains of Varak to keep it safe from her persecutors.

The old Armenian tradition tells us that 300 years later, while praying on Mount Varak, a hermit named Thotig, had a vision. He saw a shining cross with light radiating around it on top of the mountain. The light indicated to him the place where Hripsime had hidden the piece of cross so many years before. It was a miracle that this true piece of the Holy Cross was discovered! Furthermore, it is said that there was an overwhelming smell of incense where the cross was buried and the sweet fragrance could be smelled all over the land. Today we celebrate this discovery as the "Holy Cross of Varak."