

Have you shed blood yet? • Breaking open the word

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.” Watch for that zinger of a line from Paul this Sunday (at the end of the second reading, in his letter to the Hebrews). It caps a reading in which Paul encourages us to “not grow weary” or “lose heart” as we “run the race that lies before us.” Instead, like Olympic runners, he urges us to shed every burden and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, “the leader and perfecter of faith.”

But it is Paul’s line about shedding blood that has echoes in the other two readings. In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah is thrown into a muddy cistern and left to starve to death. Why? Because certain leaders thought his message was demoralizing the soldiers and the people, leading to their ruin. It’s important to know that, by this point in the book, Jerusalem is under siege by the Babylonians. Jeremiah’s message is one of prudent surrender: “Those who remain in this city shall die by means of the sword, starvation, and disease; but those who go out to the Chaldeans shall live” ([Jeremiah 38:2](#)). The takeaway here: If you speak truths people don’t want to hear, expect to be persecuted!

Jesus makes a similar warning in the Gospel: following him will cause division among friends, and even family members. It’s a truth the early Christians knew well, and one that continues to hold true for those whose commitment to the Gospel runs deep.

We’ve been warned; now we must decide whether living the Gospel is worth the price.

You can read this Sunday’s readings here:

[Scriptures for the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C](#)

Break open the word with your family

Kids

In the second reading, Paul tells us to keep going strong as we run the race for Jesus. How is being good sometimes as difficult as running a race? Who, according to Paul, can help keep us going?

Teens

Jeremiah faced constant persecution for telling people what they didn't want to hear—in this case, that the city of Jerusalem would fall, and the nation defeated by the Babylonians. Why would that be a difficult truth to hear? What are some “difficult truths” that people don't want to hear today? How do this Sunday's readings call you to change the way you live?

Adults

Does doing the right thing cause division in your family? Is it worth it? How do you distinguish “good division” (resulting from a commitment to the Gospel) from “bad division” (caused by sin) in your family?

A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to [Lectio Divina for Kids](#) to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the "dialogue" between the readings help you understand them better?
- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE's introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don't have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the [Daily Readings](#) web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to [The Sunday Website](#).