Voices of Sisters
Spirituality

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Editor's note: *Welcome to Theologians' Corner, where each week a different woman theologian from around the world offers a fresh reflection on the Sunday readings.*

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 27, 2026

Today, the liturgy offers us an occasion to reflect on daily fidelity to the Gospel in the life of every Christian. It is an ordinary time that invites us to encounter Christ in the simple gestures and ordinary moments of existence.

On this Sunday, the word of God draws attention to the consistency between thought, word and action; indeed, the readings highlight the value of justice, mercy and the capacity for personal conversion.

During ordinary time, the prevailing spirituality is one of quiet growth, like a seed sprouting in a field without fanfare. We are invited to recognize God's presence in everyday life, in our choices regarding work and family, in personal relationships, and in solidarity with our neighbors. Communities are called to spiritual vigilance, avoiding lukewarmness and superficiality, and rediscovering the profound meaning of following Christ.

In the first reading, we find a pivotal passage in Ezekiel's message that addresses the theme of individual responsibility. The text moves to the strictly personal realm: If a wicked person changes his life and becomes righteous, the iniquities he committed are forgotten, and he shall live.

The prophet imagines the Israelites accusing the Lord, saying: "The Lord's way of acting is not just." The Lord then replies: "Hear this, O people of Israel: Is it my conduct that is unjust, or rather yours?" This exchange reveals that the concept of strictly personal retribution runs counter to a rather widespread way of thinking.

After defending God's conduct, the prophet summarizes his message in two conditional statements. The first states: "If the righteous person turns away from righteousness to commit iniquity and dies because of it, he dies precisely for the iniquity he has committed."

The scenario is that of a righteous person straying from the right path: Despite the righteousness practiced up to that point, he is destined to die. The threatened death is certainly a physical event, yet it is viewed in its existential dimension, consisting of suffering and, above all, the loss of meaning resulting from separation from God.

The second conditional statement presents the opposite case: "And if the wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and acts with justice and righteousness, he saves his own life. He has reflected and turned away from all the offenses he committed; he shall surely live and not die."

Just as the righteous can sin, so too can the wicked turn away from their sin. In that case, they will live. Here, too, life signifies not merely escaping death but also experiencing the fullness of peace and well-being in communion with God.

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Ezekiel reminds us of our responsibility for the choices we make. He calls us to reenter the constant, beneficent flow of divine mercy, the mercy we may have previously driven away through sin.

God sets before Israel life and good, death and evil, and commands the people to love him, threatening the most terrible punishments should they fail to do so (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). Yet God is not indifferent to the choices his creatures make. He does not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that they turn back and live. Faith in God entails observing commandments regarding justice and solidarity with the poor. If God desires our faithfulness, it is solely because such faithfulness affords us the possibility of prosperity and happiness.

In the second reading, Paul is championing the practical spirit of the Gospel, in which faith in Jesus is not an abstract concept but a dimension to be lived out, first and foremost, within the community. Paul's call is to have the same mindset as Christ. Jesus sought no privileges, choosing instead to love humanity to the very end, even unto death, and death on a cross. This is the foundation of Christian love, a Christological love.

If we acknowledge the authority of Jesus, then we can allow our hearts to be converted. We can discover the incredible possibility God has offered humanity in Jesus. The chance to acquire a new, holy mindset is attainable because Jesus provides both the example and the Spirit. It comes through an act of self-lowering, an expression of love for the human beings we encounter every day.

The Gospel passage appears to be a simple exhortation to place more weight on deeds than on words. In reality, however, the stakes are somewhat higher.

The underlying issue is the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities: the Pharisees and chief priests, who indeed perceive themselves as the targets of Jesus' rebuke. In the verses preceding this account, they had asked Jesus who authorized him to speak; he had responded with a question about John's baptism, which they refused to answer.

The issue, therefore, centers on authority: Jesus did not answer the question directly because it was posed by his adversaries in a loaded, manipulative manner. Yet, through these parables, he provides the keys to understanding the basis of his speech. Jesus possesses authority, but not in the human sense, a power conferred

by others. He has authority because he enacts what he proclaims.

Jesus sought to convey authority that is earned and demonstrated through one's actions. Yet, those who believed him were tax collectors and prostitutes. They recognized his authority based on the righteousness he embodied and followed him, repenting.

Thus, the Gospel invites us to evaluate to whom we attribute importance and authority, perhaps to discover that what we once trusted lacked substance, and to learn the difficult lesson of how to start anew. Repentance and conversion are possible!

This is the message of Jesus: By recognizing true strength, the strength of love and making it the true authority we wish to obey (beyond any facade we might present to others), we can find the strength to put it into practice and bring about change, no matter how great or demanding that change may be.

Let us pray for the grace to correct hasty decisions in life, allowing ourselves to be guided by the authority of Christ. He invites us to step out from our no and enter in his yes so that he can guide us in our life. We must cooperate with him to transform us from within and with the psalmist we can make our prayer to "remember his mercies" to us.

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