

## Ordinary Time 7A 2014

All of the readings we have just heard present us with a challenge. Each of them challenges us to live our lives in an extraordinary way that identifies us as disciples of Jesus Christ. In the first reading, we are called to be holy because God is holy. In the second, St. Paul reminds us we are God's temple, the dwelling place of God's own Spirit. And in the Gospel we have just heard, Jesus calls us to be perfect as God is perfect.

The challenge with which these readings present us can seem overwhelming. How can I be holy as God is holy, poor sinner that I am? How can I be the dwelling place for God's own Spirit, unworthy person that I am? How can I be perfect as God is perfect, imperfect being that I am? Today's readings seem to demand too much. They seem to set us up for failure. But perhaps if we look at them in another way, they can help us to live as we ought.

When God calls us to be holy, God calls us to be what he created us to be—completely devoted to him. In calling us to be holy, God calls us to live and dwell in his presence, to separate ourselves from everything that would separate us from God.

When St. Paul tells us that we are the temple of God, he is reminding us of what God has done for us in Christ. By Christ's death and resurrection, God has made us holy; God has made us a dwelling place for his Holy Spirit. We are not the temple of God because of something we have done but because of what God has done for us.

Finally, when Jesus calls us to be perfect as God is perfect, he challenges us to be entirely devoted to God just as God is entirely faithful to us. We are not to be divided in our allegiance, but perfectly devoted to God.

Today's scriptural readings present us with three challenges that can change and transform our lives: be holy, be God's temple, be completely devoted to God. It is far better to accept these challenges than to settle for mediocrity. It is better to be a worthy dwelling place for God than a dwelling place for evil. Be holy, be perfect, be God's temple.