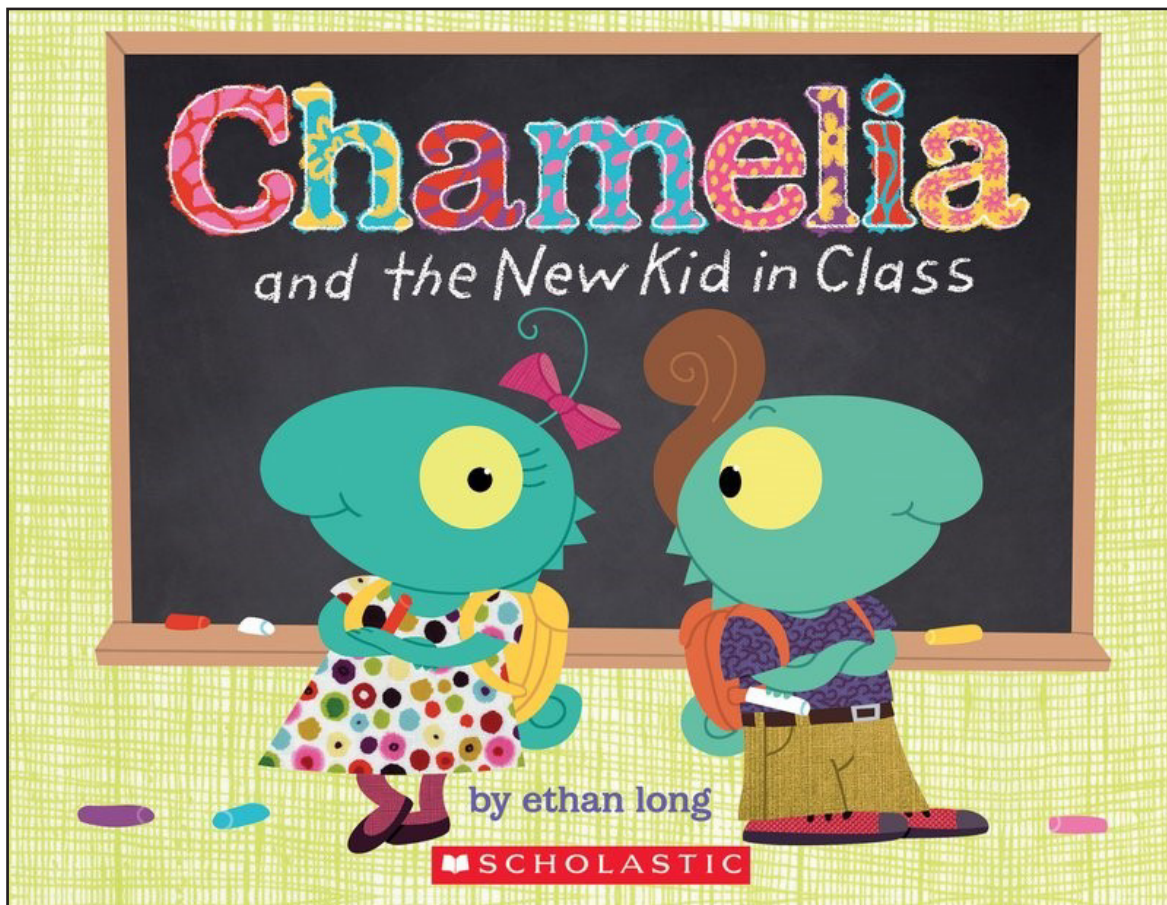


Living Grace

Cycle C 26th Sunday
Ordinary Time

"CROSSING SIDES"



*In **Chamelia and the New Kid in Class**, Chamelia is a chameleon who loves to stand out in a crowd. She's always the star of the show, especially at school. But when a new kid in class becomes the center of attention, Chamelia feels left out. She tries everything to steal the spotlight from her new competition, but nothing works. Eventually she learns to share the spotlight, and as a bonus, she makes a new best friend!*



***SAINT-MALO MONUMENT OF CLASPED HANDS**
Freestanding Sculpture by Derek Tristram ~ 1997
Corbiere, France*

EXPLORING THE ART:

STRONGER TOGETHER

This beautiful memorial, a sculpture of two hands clasping, was erected to commemorate the rescue of 307 passengers from a catamaran boat, called Saint-Malo, which ran aground on rocks off this point in 1995. A plaque accompanying the sculpture describes what had happened on that fateful day.

"During the morning of Monday April 17th 1995 whilst on passage from Jersey to Sark, the French catamaran "Saint-Malo" struck a rock known as La Frouquie, 900 metres north of La Corbière Lighthouse. Visibility was good at the time, but with a spring tide ebbing to the west and a westerly Force 5 wind, the sea conditions near Corbière were moderate to rough. Emergency services responded promptly and nearby ships gave assistance. All 307 passengers and crew were saved from the partially submerged vessel. This memorial is erected in thanksgiving and as a tribute to the rescue, which with the help of God and of many strong arms, ensured the safe return of all on board."

Derek Tristram is an artisanal stonemason, who specializes in all aspects of masonry, best known for his monumental stone carvings in granite. Derek is also an experienced educator with practical knowledge of working with school and community groups creating public art projects.

Living Grace

READ-ALoud STORY



ABIDE IN ME

Vicki Shuck, Esperanza Arts

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love.

~ John 7:7-9

Read-aloud video link:

CHAMELIA AND THE NEW KID IN CLASS

Written & Illustrated by Ethan Long

Sunday Gospel

LUKE 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day.

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table.

Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died,

he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me.

Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’

Abraham replied,

‘My child, remember that you received

what was good during your lifetime

while Lazarus likewise received what was bad;

but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.

Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’

He said, ‘Then I beg you, father,

send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them,

lest they too come to this place of torment.’

But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets.

Let them listen to them.’

He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham,

but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets,

neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

STARS OF GOD KNOW HOW TO BELONG ON BOTH SIDES.

Both of stories today illustrate examples of when being the best makes us feel the worst. In the Jesus' time, like today, people of extreme riches and extreme poverty lived side by side each other. In the Gospel story, Lazarus and the rich man live in close proximity, and the story implies that the rich man ignored the vulnerabilities and needs of Lazarus who was in his path every day.

In our children's story, Chamelia is use to being the star of the class. All the attention is usually centered on her as she is well liked and her classmates find her quite entertaining. That all changes when the new kid comes to the class, and the kids stop watching and listening to Chamelia, as they are intrigued in discovering who Cooper is. Chamelia does not like this, she is not use to having to share the attention. The story of Chamelia illustrates how children are feel uncomfortable when they have to choose sides.

In the values of the world, the rich man and Chamelia are the super stars. They both share in very comfortable positions of prestige and life in the lime light. "It's all about me!" They thrive on their status and take advantage of it, but eventually both characters regretted being so self-absorbed that they ignored the people around them. God's way is that of compassion and mercy for others as the highest value. Jesus wants no one to feel the deep pain of exclusion. A life of isolation creates a great deal of pain, both now and in life ever after. We have all been there and it hurts.

It is important to note that Jesus was directing his message to the Pharisees (the religious leaders) who were the superstars of his times. The Pharisees enjoyed very comfortable lives and often turned a blind eye to the poor. Jesus wanted to shake them up in order to heal them from their self-imposed blindness and hardness of heart. He hoped that they might repent and turn their hearts around before it was too late. Jesus also wants US to wake up to how we extend ourselves to the vulnerable people in our lives and in our world. This defines us and affects the outcome of our lives. Jesus wakes us up to eternal values as a higher good.

In the end, Jesus did what the rich man asked for. He crossed over through death to bring all who reach for him to the fullness of life in this world and in the next. Jesus is our Super Star. Through him, even death cannot divide. Now, how can we cross sides to build bridges of faith, love, and unity as Jesus did? These are the values of the Kingdom of God.

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

YOUR STORY: Have you ever felt excluded? Have you ever felt like a "star"? When does "being the best feel the worst"?

THE CHILDREN'S STORY: What happens when Chamelia shows compassion and mercy with Cooper? When a bridge of love and friendship is built between them, how does that change the whole classroom?

THE GOSPEL STORY: What kind of change is Jesus calling for in the Gospel story? Where can we get out of our comfort zone and reach out in mercy and compassion to others? (In our world, our neighborhood, our classrooms, our families, or our church.) How could this bring about real change? How would that make us God's stars?

What are some ways we can cross sides to build a bridge of love and friendship? Who can we offer care and connection to someone who is on the other side?

Biblical Background

LUKE 16:19-31

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: The setting would be a very nice home in a village. It would be assumed that the rich man owned the largest home in the local area.

TERMS: Rich Man This is a man who relates to his riches in a manner that is not consistent with the plan of God. God blesses us so that we can be generous to others. This man is an example created by Jesus to represent someone who is not aware of the needs of others.

Purple The color of the very wealthy. It was very difficult to produce the color purple as a dye agent. The process took time and was the result of milking, one drop at a time, the purple dye from the Murex snail. Millions have to be harvested to create only one vat of dye, and each one is smaller than your finger nail. Once the dye is used on wool or cotton, it is subjected to sunlight and the color is set. This was also how they would get royal blue and red colors on fabrics. These colors were also associated with royalty as was purple.

CULTURAL INSIGHT: *Living in luxury everyday* - What happened to the Sabbath? It appears that this character in the parable does not honor God by taking the time to move out of ordinary life for a day each week as the law prescribed. *At his gate was laid a beggar* - this man was not a beggar as we understand, but rather a man to whom people coming and going into the house of the rich man could give alms. He was "alms worthy" and would have been placed in this position by his family. Jewish people are required to pray twice daily, fast one day a year, and give alms to any alms worthy person they see every day. This fellow served this purpose in the village. He would have been known by all. *Dogs* were considered dangerous and not kept as pets in the Biblical period. They were feral and found food that was discarded in the area as they roamed about at night. The beggar would have been terrified by such animals. This point was a shock element to wake people up to the stories' impact. *Rich Man* - Even from the other side, he still tries to give commands to Abraham. He just does not get it. All his wealth has not revealed to him a need for God and the requirement to serve God.

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: Moses and the Prophets are enough. The message of salvation that comes to us through the Bible is sufficient. It is all we need to know how to live in right relationship with God. The Ten Commandments direct us to love and care for others. There is no directive to offer sacrifice to God, but rather to take care of our relationship with God, and then let that relationship direct us in our love and concern for others. Jesus teaches that in the afterlife, besides heaven, there is another state - a state of torment. Isolation brings about torment both now and in the afterlife. Again, Jesus is pointing out that when wealth in this life does not include the care of those in need, it will bring isolation in this life and the next. Building bridges and crossing over divisions grows the Kingdom of God. Jesus is making things clear here. We must acknowledge our need for God no matter what we have or do not have. We must be awake and willing to provide for the needs of those who lack. This keeps us ALL cared for, safe, and comforted, both in this life and the next.

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME
AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: Have you had experienced being on “the other side”? Did you resolve it? How? Brainstorm ways as a family you can cross over to the other side and build a bridge of friendship and care.

GOSPEL CHARACTER QUALITIES: **COMPASSION**
COURAGE

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: Buy a big package of water bottles to keep in your car. Attach a prayer card to each one. Offer them to people you pass by who are in need. Make it a practice to pray for them daily. Learn more about the reality of homelessness and how it happens. Visit some shelters in the area and pray as a family about ways to get involved.