

- Our readings today are so very important because they give us some wonderful insight into the nature of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Today's readings provide us not so much with a portrait of His personality, but rather they teach us about why Jesus became man.
- In our first reading from Isaiah we hear of the prophecy that tells of how Jesus will give His life as an offering for sin.
- Isaiah tells us that the coming Messiah is willing to suffer for us, even though our sins are the cause of His suffering. Moreover, Isaiah tells us that because Jesus suffers for us and bears our guilt, we can be saved.
- In the second reading from the Book of Hebrews, we hear Jesus spoken of as a "great high priest." He is a priest who knows and understands our weaknesses, and He knows our temptations. Therefore, we should have absolutely no fear in asking Him for mercy.
- The author of Hebrews tells us that we should "confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help."
- Lastly, the Gospel today tells us that Jesus "did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many."
- It's all very consoling, isn't it? And that's how it should be. But even more than consoling us and giving us confidence in our Lord's goodness, hopefully this insight that these readings provide will help us love Jesus more!
- Hopefully this knowledge of our Lord will help us deepen our relationship with Jesus and help us to trust Him more and seek His mercy more. But most importantly, this knowledge of Jesus should help us who call ourselves Christians to be more Christ-like.
- As Christians, as people who have taken on His name, we are called not simply to love Jesus, but to be like Jesus! We're called to follow His example in every way, especially in the way we treat others.
- So like Jesus, we must be willing to suffer for others, even those who hurt us . . . most especially for those who hurt us and cause us pain.
- Whenever we are hurt by someone, the normal human responses arising out of our brokenness are to strike back and then to nurse our wounds and protect ourselves from future harm from that person.
- While these are normal human responses, they are not Christian responses. The truly Christ-like response begins with forgiveness, but even goes beyond mere forgiveness to a willingness to suffer and to offer up one's suffering for the good of the one who hurt us.
- This is what Christ taught us from the cross. Jesus didn't just die for us to save us from our sins. He died *because* of us. We caused His death by our sinfulness! And yet still He chose to die for us and to offer His suffering and death as a means to save us!
- You see, there's a particular magnanimity that Christians are called to possess: a greatness and nobility of soul that enables one to bear suffering calmly and to rise above human faults and failings in order to generously and genuinely care for the needs of others.
- And this magnanimity that we are all called to possess must be rooted in a simple humility that recognizes that we are all flawed and sinful human beings, and therefore we must be willing to sympathize with the weaknesses of others, even when we become the victims of the weaknesses and faults of others.

- The great poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once wrote: “If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should see sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.”
- His point is that if we can just get past our own negative emotions that naturally arise when we are hurt by others and actually try to understand why people act the way they do, we will soon be less inclined to exact recompense from those who have hurt us and more inclined to overlook their faults and failings.
- While it is sometimes just, necessary, and eminently charitable to correct or admonish a sinner, we must remember that correction must always be done with a charitable spirit and a genuine desire to help the person overcome their faults so that they may grow in holiness.
- Ultimately, my friends, if we wish to be like Christ, we must be willing to serve other rather than be served by others. We must be willing to set aside our own needs and wants, our own emotions and sense of justice, in order to help others achieve their salvation.
- Think for a moment what a better world this would be if we all set out to serve one another and to worry about the needs of others rather than always looking to take care of ourselves.
- Think about what a better world this would be if we were all quick to extend mercy and forgive one another, rather than holding grudges.
- Think about what a better world this would be if we were all willing to sympathize and understand the weaknesses of others and willing to suffer for the sake of others.
- Think about what a better world this would be if all of us who called ourselves “Christian” were indeed Christ-like.