



## **Worship Service Theme: Courage**

**Welcome:** Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is \_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme for today is **courage**.

How would you describe courage? The Catholic catechism lists courage as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here's how it's described: "With the gift of courage, we overcome our fear and are willing to take risks. A person with courage is willing to stand up for what is right in the sight of God, even if it means accepting rejection, verbal abuse, or even physical harm and death. The gift of courage allows people the firmness of mind that is required both in doing good and in enduring evil."

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

### **Opening Hymn: Doxology**

**Statement of Faith:** Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**For the Beauty of the Earth**

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**Amazing Grace**

**First reading:** Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, Moses' assistant, <sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel ... Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

<sup>6</sup>Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ...

<sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Jesus Loves Me**

**Second reading:** Matthew 10:16, 26-31

Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>16</sup>“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ... <sup>26</sup>have no fear of anyone or anything, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ... <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one

of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

### **Suggested Hymns:**

#### **Softly and Tenderly**

#### **Leaning on the Everlasting Arms**

**Interactive Homily:** Let’s talk more about courage.

- What have you seen in your life that you thought was courageous? At home; in your school; on the world stage...
  - Jackie Robinson, first black player in the baseball Major Leagues
  - Young men volunteering for wartime
  - Spouses raising kids alone
  - Someone standing up to a bully
  - Civil Rights era lunch counter protests
  - Women protesting for the right to vote
- Did any of you yourselves, or did you have parents or spouses or siblings, that fought in a war? What did they do that was courageous?
- Is it true that “Might makes right, and the guy with the most weapons wins”? Does strength equal courage?
- If you’re courageous, does that mean you have no fear?
  - No; courage is acting bravely *despite* fear
- Why do we hold up courage as a virtue?
  - Helps us stand up for what’s right
  - Helps us follow God’s leading even in tough circumstances
- Why does God tell us to be courageous? Let’s read the passage from Joshua again...
  - Joshua 1:9: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, **for** [in other words, **because**] the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
  - Is everything always going to go well? No...
  - But what does God promise?
    - “I will not leave you or forsake you.”

- “Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
- In Matthew 10, Jesus says that God knows you intimately and watches you carefully, even knows how many hairs are on your head! “Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the miracle and blessing of courage.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

**Lord’s Prayer:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**This is My Father’s World**  
**It is Well with My Soul**  
**Standing on the Promises**

**Third Reading:** Quotes on Courage

Ernest Hemingway famously defined courage as “grace under pressure.”

Winston Churchill stated, “Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all others.”

According to poet Maya Angelou, “Courage is the most important of the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”

Harper Lee wrote the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The main character is a lawyer named Atticus Finch who defends a black man who is wrongly accused of a crime, even though he knows he can’t win the trial. In the book, Atticus tells his children, “I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage

is a man with a gun in his hand. Courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what."

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." – South African president Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison for standup up against apartheid

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing  
Shall We Gather at the River**

**Fourth Reading: 2 Cor. 5:5-8**

We know that if the tent that is our earthly home [that is, our body] is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent [the body] we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling ... <sup>5</sup>He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. <sup>6</sup>So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds  
I Need Thee Every Hour**

**Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word "Lord")**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)**