

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: Jeremiah 20:10-13

Romans 5:12-15

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

"Kids! Kids!" Dad said excitedly. "I know it's still early, but I can't wait to get to the Scripture reading for this morning! As soon as everyone has gotten dressed and had breakfast, meet me in the living room!"

"Wow, Dad! What's up?" Vincent wondered.

"Well, Vincent," Dad replied. "Our Gospel reading for this morning reminds me of a great parallel story. I guess I just can't wait to tell it to you!"

As requested, the Pauline kids speedily got dressed and ate a good, quick breakfast. Before long, they were all seated in the living room, waiting for their dad to tell the story.

"This must be some great story!" Lucy smiled.

"And the story is true, too!" Dad said.

At that, Dad opened his Bible to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 10. Jesus is talking to His apostles and telling them not to be afraid.

When he had finished, Dad said, "Isn't this a great passage! What is it that struck any of you the most?"

"I like the part about the sparrow!" Lucy stated. "Can you imagine all the birds and sparrows over the entire wide, wide world, and God knows each one of them! That's really neat!"

"It is, Lucy!" Mom said. "And what about counting all the hairs on our heads?"

"Hey, why are you looking at me, Mom?!" Vincent laughed, knowing that he was a few weeks overdue for a haircut.

Dad continued. "I am really struck by how Jesus tells His disciples not to be afraid of proclaiming the Gospel truths loud and clear. In our world today, we are charged with speaking firmly and directly, not being influenced by the consequences. Many people nowadays are making policies that go against our Christian beliefs. It is our duty to speak truthfully in these instances."

"That's right, Martin," his wife added. "The Catholic Church has always honored saints whose lives were witnesses to the faith. Jesus reminds us many, many times in the New

Testament that He will welcome those who have given testimony to the faith, and condemn those whose fear caused them to be ashamed of the Gospel."

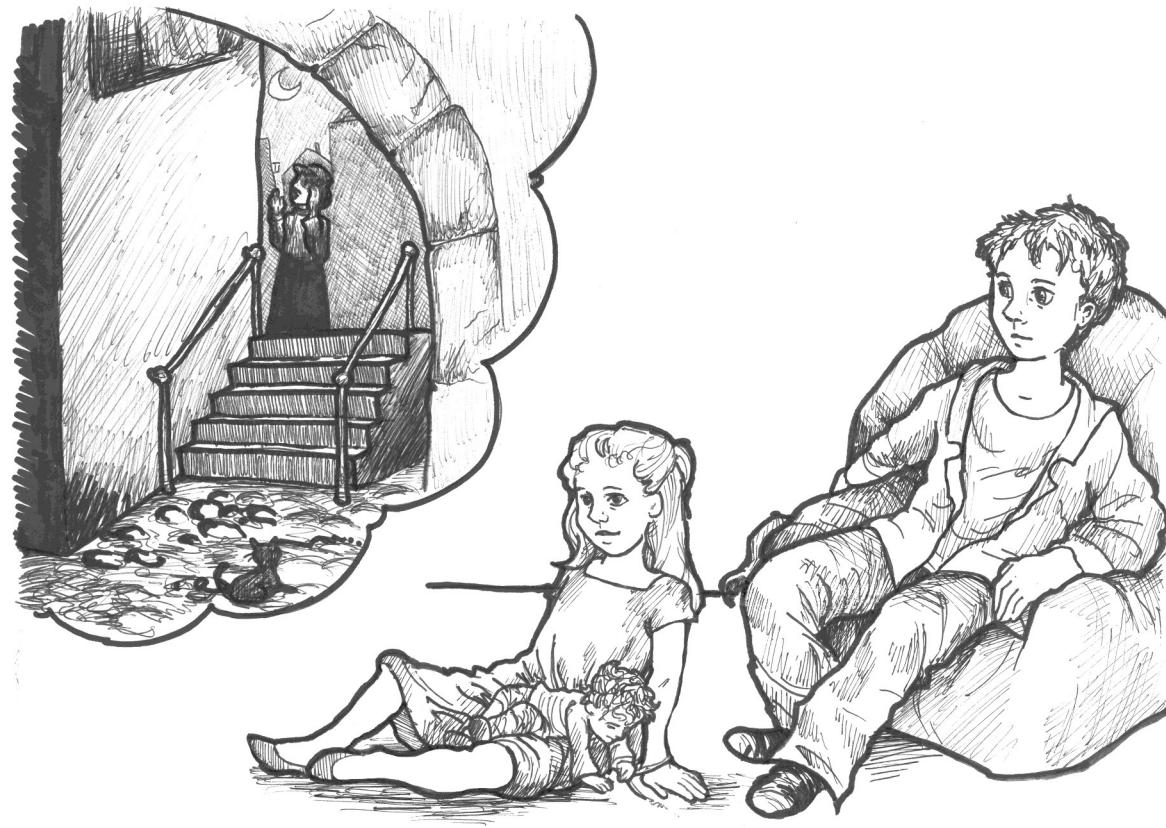
"And that brings me to my parallel story this morning," Dad said. "This is a very true story, and it took place in Rome in October 1978."

All the kids settled in to listen. This sounded like it would be great.

"You see, Kids," Dad continued, "what really happened in October 1978 was that a young cardinal named Karol Wojtyla was elected as Pope."

"Cool, Dad!" Vincent said. "You're talking about Pope John Paul the Second!"

"That's right, Son," Dad said. "And after Pope John Paul's election, he spent his first night thinking about the task at hand. The Pope knew he could do all things with the help and grace of God, but the human side of him made things weigh heavily on his mind. Well, ... and this is where the story gets really interesting ... the Pope was inside his apartment in Saint Peter's Square that first night and, from the plaza below, a lone priest stood in the night's darkness. He had heard of the Pope's election and made a point to be directly underneath the Pope's window. All night, and I mean, *all night*, he proclaimed loudly up to the Pope's apartment, 'Corragio! Corragio, Pope John Paul! Corragio! Corragio, Pope John Paul!' Minute after minute, hour after hour, he exclaimed, 'Corragio! Corragio, Pope John Paul!'"



"Corragio?" asked Lucy, "what does 'corragio' mean, Daddy?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Lucy," Dad said. "What this priest was saying in English was, 'Courage! Courage, Pope John Paul!' He was telling the new Pope to have courage, and to not be afraid."

"Why was he thinking that the Pope would be afraid, Dad?" Mary Clare asked.

"You see, Mary Clare, this priest knew the changing times we were in. He knew that the Pope would need to speak truthfully and directly to the entire world. Many social policies were changing, and there was unrest in many regions on earth. He knew that, despite the consequences the Pope would have to suffer, the world needed to hear the truth of Christ. I guess that it was just this priest's unique way of encouraging the Pope to continue to be a light in the darkness, just like our Gospel reading talks about today!"

"Well, I'm wondering just one thing, Dad," Vincent said. "What did the Pope think about someone yelling up to his window all night, *over and over* again? He must have thought it was really strange!"

"Quite the opposite, Vincent," Dad told him. "The Pope was really taken by this man who stood outside all night just to encourage him. In fact, he was quite impressed! The Pope asked someone who it was and received him as a guest that next morning! And this is another neat part! Pope John Paul made him his official Papal Preacher!"

"Who was it, Daddy?" Lucy asked.

"Well, his name was Father Cantalamessa."

"Boy, just for shouting 'Corragio!'" Vincent laughed. "That's an awesome story! In fact, I wonder how that would work on you and Mom about getting my allowance increased, Dad!"

Then in a firm voice, Vincent shouted, "Corragio, Dad! Give Vincent more money in his allowance!"

"Nice try, Vincent!" Dad chuckled, and giving his son an encouraging squeeze, they headed off to Mass.