

*Homily for Monday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
St. Thomas the Apostle Church – West Springfield, Massachusetts  
August 12, 2019*



Scripture Readings: Deuteronomy 10:12-22 ✕ Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20 ✕ Matthew 17:22-27

**I**n a sense, today's Gospel reading is comprised of two acts. The first act tells us that Jesus announced His coming suffering and death. As a result, a great sadness came over His disciples. Sadness is the normal response when we are faced with the departure or the death of someone we love. All of us have experienced that kind of sadness. To some extent, we live with it all the time. Yet, we cannot allow such sadness to overshadow us; we have to keep going using the strength the LORD gives us. Jesus and His disciples kept travelling on, even after His somber prediction of His Passion and death.



In the second act we hear about a more up-beat message. When they reached the home of Simon Peter in Capernaum, they discussed the Temple tax. This half-shekel tax towards the upkeep of the temple was due from annually from every adult Jew. Jesus said that, in principle, He and His disciples were exempt from the tax, because He embodied the new temple. Yet, He tells Peter to pay the tax so as not to give offense. In other words, Jesus declares freedom in this regard but chooses not to exercise this freedom, for the sake of charity. This reminds us that while our conscience may feel free in regard to certain things, it can be better to refrain when the good of others is at stake. ✕