

OCTOBER 1, 2017



# TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



EZEKIEL 18:25–28

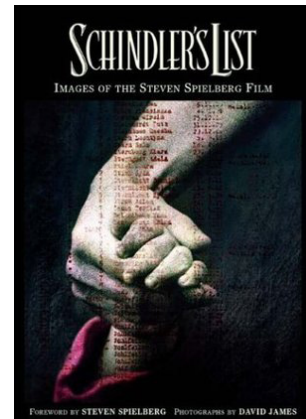
PSALM 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9

PHILIPPIANS 2:1–11

MATTHEW 21:28–32

## REFLECTION

The second most visited site in Israel is the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations. In this garden, trees have been planted with names engraved on plaques honoring non-Jewish people who risked their lives to save Jewish people during the Holocaust. The movie *Schindler's List* tells the story of a Catholic, Oskar Schindler (1908–1974), who has been honored as a righteous man because of his heroic work of saving Jews. What does it mean to be righteous? In the Old Testament righteousness is a very important ideal. The Hebrew word *sedeq* basically means right standing and right behavior within a community. Righteousness is the opposite of wickedness. Oskar Schindler was honored as righteous by Israel because he illustrated right behavior and right standing. He risked his life repeatedly to save the lives of Jews who were headed to the gas chambers. Notice in the reading for today the prophet Ezekiel says we preserve our life when we turn from wickedness and do “what is right and just” (v. 27). For Ezekiel, wickedness and sin lead to death, while righteousness leads to life. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that righteousness is difficult. He tells the chief priests, “When John [the Baptist] came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him” (v. 32). But the surprise in the passage is that those on the margins, the tax collectors and prostitutes, did respond to John’s call to right standing and right behavior. It is these who Jesus says will enter the Kingdom before the religious leaders. Perhaps righteousness is like lifting weights. Typically weight lifters begin with lighter weights and gradually lift heavier ones. Muscles get stronger when exercised against resistance. I believe our righteousness grows when we resist wickedness and exercise our right standing for others.



### SCHINDLER'S LIST (1993)

Teens under seventeen are required to watch this film with a parent or guardian.

## ACTION

Watch the movie *Schindler's List*. Then write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give you courage to do what is right and just.



## JOURNALING QUESTIONS



● Where do you make a stand for righteousness?