



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The last will be first

“Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you.” The Richard Gillard hymn with this line has become familiar to many Catholics. Sung at funerals, weddings, Holy Thursday foot washings, and Sunday Mass, the lyrics touch human hearts in their eloquent call to humbly serve the needs of others. Pope Francis, who serves the poor in his every word and deed, calls us to share in this journey. How can I surrender my need for recognition? How can I serve the needs of others?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Wisdom 2:12, 17-20; James 3:16-4:3; Mark 9:30-37 (134)*. *“They had been arguing about who was the most important.”*

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Guess who came to dinner

The names of the apostles are integral to our story of faith, but in truth, we know very little about many of them. Bits of information from the gospels and Acts of the Apostles do allow a glimpse of their lives in the first Christian community. The rest we can only prayerfully imagine. We know that Matthew collected from his Jewish kin the hated Roman tax and that he associated with other tax collectors and “sinners.” What we can prayerfully imagine is Jesus sharing a meal with them, and then we might wonder if we would have joined them at table.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643)*. *“I have come to call not the self-righteous.”*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Finding new roads

“Instead of being just a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself,” Pope Francis said in 2013. “Go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent.” Discipleship requires reaching out beyond yourself or those you know; being church means encountering others where they are—welcoming, listening, and creating a family of worship that expands far beyond the walls of our comfort zone.



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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TODAY’S READINGS: *Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20; Luke 8:19-21 (450)*. *“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it.”*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 FEAST OF PIUS OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST

Marked for holiness

Padre Pio epitomizes the idea of a saint whose life was marked by heavenly signs. Of the more than 300 stigmatists—persons whose bodies carry marks resembling the wounds of the crucified Christ—in the history of the church, Pio was the only priest to be so honored. His reputed miraculous signs included exuding a fragrance not compatible with five fresh wounds; bilocation; prophecy; the power of conversion; and the ability to read hearts. But to Pio himself, his dearest accomplishment was establishing a hospital for the relief of suffering. Looking like a saint may be appealing. Acting like a saint is better!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Ezra 9:5-9; Luke 9:1-6 (451)*. *“Jesus . . . gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.”*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Full of holes

Carry your wealth in a bag full of holes and your fortunes will change. So the prophet Haggai observes. Today on the Muslim Feast of the Sacrifice, Muslims recall an ancient ritual full of holes: child sacrifice as a means of proving loyalty to God. Abraham brings his son Ishmael (not Isaac in the Quran version) to Mt. Moriah to demonstrate his fidelity. As in the familiar Bible story, the sacrifice is replaced and the son goes free. Heaven values the life of every child.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Haggai 1:1-8; Luke 9:7-9 (452)*. *“And whoever earned wages earned them for a bag with holes in it.”*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

The where of prayer

Place is important to prayer. “Where does prayer come from?” the Catechism of the Catholic Church asks (2562). You can pray anywhere, but pay attention to where it is that you are able to be most fully present to God. After all, prayer doesn’t come to us, we come to prayer. In prayer, you offer your whole self. “Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole (person) who prays,” the Catechism continues. Open your heart in and to prayer. God is waiting there; you just need to show up.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Haggai 2:1-9; Luke 9:18-22 (453)*. *“I will fill this house with glory . . . in this place I will give you peace.”*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

FEAST OF COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MARTYRS

Heal what is broken

We have only legend for these twin brothers from early church history: They were healers born in what is modern-day Syria who, despite their skill and popularity, never accepted payment for their ministry and died as martyrs. Even if we know few “facts” about them, the human need for healing keeps their story alive. Nearly a thousand years later, Francis of Assisi rebuilt a little church dedicated to Saint Damian that had fallen into ruin and there heard the icon of the crucified Christ instruct him also to rebuild the Church with a capital C. Healing, rebuilding, restoring. What wound can you salve today? What broken relationship can you rebuild?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a; Luke 9:43b-45 (454)*. *“Pay attention to what I am telling you.”*

CatholicMom.com Gospel Activities - Mark 9:30-37

W T T X G R E A T E S T G S B
D W J H Y C T X A S N H V U T
I E G V Y A X T F C H I L D Q
S L S V W P P O R E E B C A A
C V J S C E S Z A C L X U Y E
I E S V Z R Y S I C A L L E D
P Z V L R N P J D O E X S L Y
L S V L Z A Q U E S T I O N E
E D E D Y U F F K E B K K V F
S J T R X M G A L I L E E I Q
L C G W V Q K T K V U H I V N
M A R K M A A M T H F I R S T
Y X O K I H N G Q S Z P C Q C
E W Y N U I S T H G L A S T M
O O J E E C J J E S U S Q V Q

Word Bank

Afraid, Called, Capernaum, Child, Disciples, First, Galilee, Greatest, Jesus, Last, Mark, One, Question, Servant, Twelve