

The Work of the People

The Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the last three months of Ordinary Time the Lectionary offers a rich array of texts for reflection and spiritual nourishment. It is too simplistic to give a single thread that ties together all the Scripture passages for the Sundays of this section of Ordinary Time, but there is at least one broad focus that could be offered: how-to live-in faithfulness to God.

The narrator in the Book of Exodus reports a dramatic conversation between God and Moses. God is displeased with the infidelity of the "stiff-necked" people and intends to bring punishment upon them. God sends Moses to make such an announcement. But Moses implores God to remember that they are "your own people" and reminds God of the promise to make his people a great nation.

Paul writes to Timothy in the second reading today. Paul's autobiographical account to Timothy recalls his time of persecution of the followers of Christ. But Paul gives thanks to God for sending him the grace to change his life. He now believes that Christ came into the world to save sinners and he humbly counts himself as one of them.

Chapter 15 of Luke's account recounts three of the most familiar parables of Jesus. The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son attest to the mercy of God. Each notes the joy of the shepherd, the woman, and the father when the sheep, the coin, and the son have been found. The compassion of God is personified in the actions of the shepherd, the woman, and the father who seek out the lost.

Our reflection for this week is from Fr. Michael Casey who is a Cistercian monk of Tarra-warra Abbey in Australia. He is a well-known retreat master and lecturer, and the author of many books on spirituality.

Years ago the BBC had a program entitled "Desert Island Discs" in which celebrities were asked to compile a program of music they would want to have with them in the unlikely event they would be marooned on a desert island. I would suggest that the texts of today's liturgy would be a good choice for any sojourn in such a setting. They present us with a single, coherent message about the absolute and unconditional mercy of God.

Although the children of Israel were stiff-necked and recalcitrant, God withheld the punishment that was their due. Although David was an adulterer and a murderer, God washed him from his guilt and cleansed him of his sin. Although Paul was a blasphemer who persecuted the Church and was the foremost of sinners, God treated him mercifully and gave him the grace to be an apostle.

The good news culminates in the reading from the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. God relentlessly seeks out all those who are lost. Some of us are like the lost coin, simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Others of us are lost because, in our native stupidity, we have left the common path and wandered off on our own. And some of us are in trouble because we have willfully abandoned our Father's house and squandered our birthright in self-indulgence.

Whatever the reason for our finding ourselves far from where we want to be, we can be sure of one thing: God is actively seeking us in our misery, wanting nothing else but to bring us to that place of joyful reconciliation, where whatever is lost is recovered and sinners are welcome to celebrate in the eternal banquet hall of heaven.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Cor. 11:17-26, 33/Lk. 7:1-10

Tuesday: 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27-31a/Lk. 7:11-17

Wednesday: Nm. 21:4b-9/Phil. 2:6-11/Jn. 3:13-17

Thursday: 1 Cor. 15:1-11/Jn. 19:25-27 or Lk. 2:33-35

Friday: 1 Cor. 15:12-20/Lk. 8:1-3

Saturday: 1 Cor. 15:35-37, 42-49/Lk. 8:4-15

Sunday: Am. 8:4-7/1Tm. 2:1-8/Lk. 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME

If you are a Catholic who has been away from the Church for a while, this invitation is for you. Have you been praying to bring someone home to the Church? Pass this invitation on to them. Starting on Thursday, Sept. 22, The Epiphany of the Lord Parish will conduct a free series of informal listening sessions, titled "Catholics Returning Home," for 6 weeks at 7 pm at St. Brigid Church in Meadville. The series is an invitation to non-practicing Catholics to renew their relationship with the Catholic Church. These listening sessions will be conducted in a support-group format, with updates on the Catholic faith. Former non-practicing Catholics or converts will facilitate the evenings. Everyone is welcome. For more details call 814 336-1112.

"Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!"

WORSHIP

Monday, September 12
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Tuesday, September 13
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Wednesday, September 14
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Thursday, September 15
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Friday, September 16
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Saturday, September 17
 4:30 pm + Living & Deceased Parishioners
 Sunday, September 18
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 For Special Intention,
 Jerry & Loeta Derby (Tom & Gerry King)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Jim Rasavage (Carol & Family)

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, September 17
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession
 Sunday, September 18
 AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Before Mass - Confession
 AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 After Mass - Confession
 Monday, September 19
 5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO

A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Parents are like that shepherd in today's gospel for they don't give up and can't rest if one of their children has wandered away. A parent's persistent love provides a glimpse of the unconditional love for each of us by God, Our Father. A parent is a window to the Divine.

ST. BERNADETTE MISSION STEWARDSHIP	
Offertory	\$665.00
Maintenance	150.00
Candles	27.00
Catholic Education	40.00
TOTAL	\$882.00

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COLLECTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As summer begins to wane and the school year begins, I ask for your support of the Catholic Education Collection being held on the weekend of September 17-19.

This annual second collection supports lifelong education and faith formation opportunities for the faithful throughout our diocese. We are banking on your help as an integral part in our success.

Half of the funds raised from this collection remain in your parish to support your local education and faith formation programs. The other half provides funds across the diocese for ministry and leadership training, technology support, creative projects in faith formation as well as tuition assistance for families with children attending Catholic schools. A small portion also supports the Catholic University of America.

Thank you for your generosity. Contributions can be made directly at your parish or online at www.ErieRCD.org/Catholic-Education-Collection.html.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your family. With every best wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
 Bishop of Erie

"The Harvest is Plentiful, But the Workers are Few"
(Luke 10:2)

Holy Cross Fraternity has reactivated an apostolate called the Poverello Garden, and we have been tending it with great care. Most of the Poverello Garden has been harvested by volunteers and all food goes to the Meadville Soup Kitchen and to a food pantry supported by St. Hippolyte parish. Now we are preparing to harvest 450 feet of potatoes, yes, that is one row that is football field and half long. This will take many hands (approximately 40-50 people) to harvest, so if you would like to help with the harvest or have students needing service hours, this is a great project for them. There is also a perk for your labor, the fraternity will provide a luncheon for everyone who comes to help. We will begin at 9 am on Saturday, Sept. 17 and work until noon. Call Eileen Mantz, OFS at 814 425-1405 to sign up, and may "the Lord of the Harvest" (Matt 9:38) be with us.

RESPECT LIFE

Respect Life Sunday Mass with Bishop Persico is Oct. 2 at 11:30 am at The Epiphany of the Lord Parish in Meadville. Reception to follow immediately after.

Please check the bulletin boards at either entrance of the Church for more information.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA STEWARDSHIP	
Offertory	\$1,257.00
Maintenance	335.00
Catholic Education	55.00
Candles	21.00
CSA	502.00
TOTAL	\$2,170.00
Catholic Service Appeal	
Pledged: \$31,943 Paid: \$27,438	

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
