

JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER 2025

Living Faith

Daily Catholic Devotions

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... ask and you will
receive;
seek ^{and you}
will find...

LUKE 11:9





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Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.

— LUKE 2:19

Dear Readers:

The words of Jesus on our magazine cover describe the power of prayer within a living faith. Prayer is talking to Jesus in a two-way conversation. Jesus invites us to tell him our hearts' desires. He longs to know our supplications, to satisfy our spiritual hungers. "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find" (Luke 11:9).



If we were talking with Jesus right now, right here, what might we be saying? Are we asking? Are we seeking? When was the last time we took the time to unpack our hearts before the One who loves us, the Maker of Our Hearts?

Each day in *Living Faith*, you are invited to receive the Word of God and then to pause to reflect and ponder. Let me suggest one additional step: After that, tell Jesus exactly what's there in your heart. In your own words. You already have his invitation.

■ PAT GOHN, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Have you ever made a pilgrimage? Maybe it's time to consider one. See page 102.

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David Dziena, Publisher

Pat Gohn, Editorial Director

Kasey Nugent, Assistant Editor; Ben Kupiszewski, Editorial Assistant

James E. Adams, Founding Editor

Living Faith provides daily reflections based on a Scripture passage from the daily Mass. With readings for daily Mass listed with each devotion, this booklet helps Catholics pray and meditate in spirit with the seasons of the Church Year. Citations are from the Mass Lectionary, which is based on the *New American Bible*.

IMPRIMATUR

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1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 + Psalm 96:1, 3-5, 11-13 + Luke 4:16-30

The Messiah Next Door

They also asked, “Is this not the son of Joseph?” LUKE 4:22

Mother Teresa often said that Jesus sometimes comes to us in the “distressing disguise of the poor.” This Gospel takes that a step further, suggesting that he might also come to us in the distressing disguise of our neighbor. After hearing Jesus preach in the hometown synagogue, the people were impressed, but then incredulous. Where did this guy come from? His father was Joseph, the carpenter, the quiet one down the road. Jesus never went to a fancy school. Why should we take him seriously?

How quickly they judged him and dismissed him! We would never do that. Would *we*?

The Gospels tell us repeatedly that Jesus often showed up in unexpected places—in a manger, by a well, walking on water, intervening to save a woman caught in adultery.

Maybe there's a lesson here.

Maybe we need to look for Christ anywhere and everywhere. We might be surprised where we find him.

■ DCN. GREG KANDRA

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11 + Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14 + Luke 4:31-37

The Power of the Word

[Those in the synagogue said to one another,] “What is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” And news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region.

LUKE 4:36-37

Jesus’ word remains as powerful today as ever before. Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, calls us to turn away from temptation—the “unclean spirits” of selfishness, pride, anger, envy, indifference and so much more. When we are honest with ourselves, we see that we need more practice in loving and forgiving one another. We may wince at the thought of loving our enemies, requiring us to put down the yardstick with which we measure and judge them. Let us look first into our own hearts with patience, trusting in the authority of Jesus’ word to heal us.

Help us, Jesus, to be like you, to be different and to not back down in standing up for the poor, forgiving those who hurt us. May we work tirelessly for peace and justice. Help us to spread the Word in the world today.

■ DEBORAH A. MEISTER

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

St. Gregory the Great

Colossians 1:1-8 + Psalm 52:10-11 + Luke 4:38-44

To Heal and Serve

...because for this purpose I have been sent. LUKE 4:43

Without hesitation, Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law. As she regained her strength, she began to serve Jesus and his disciples. At sunset, Jesus helped many others who needed healing. The nature of service is cyclical. Once healed or replenished, newfound vigor should be channeled into serving and healing others. Acts of compassion can multiply when we serve others with love.

Today, we are challenged by both the Gospel and the life of St. Gregory the Great to consider the ripple effect of our actions and inspire others to contribute to the well-being of others. As followers of Christ, we are sent for a purpose—to help heal emotional, physical and spiritual wounds—to respond to the needs of others, to embody Christ's healing presence in our communities.

How do you embrace your call to heal and serve with authenticity and love?

Loving God, please grant us Christlike compassion to fulfill our purpose of healing and service.

■ VIVIAN AMU

Need a Bigger Boat?

They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. LUKE 5:7

So abundant are the blessings of God! Even if we do not consider ourselves affluent, we in Western societies are graced with an amazing quantity of gifts. For the most part, even the poor among us are fortunate compared to those in many other parts of the world.

Are your nets tearing due to abundance? One look in your pantry, or in your grocery cart, may provide the answer. Perhaps clothing in your closet that hasn't been worn in years is your "great number of fish" that could be brought to a thrift store.

Whether we are experiencing abundance or scarcity, we all need help from time to time. As a people of faith, we are called to help others (and to graciously accept help, something with which I tend to struggle). Also, let's not forget to regularly signal Jesus, our greatest partner, who is always "in the boat" with us and willing to come to help.

■ **TERENCE HEGARTY**

*Terence Hegarty is the editor of Living With Christ.
Visit LivingWithChrist.us.*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Colossians 1:15-20 + Psalm 100:1-5 + Luke 5:33-39

‘Sing Joyfully’

Sing joyfully to the LORD...

Know that the LORD is God;

he made us, his we are;

Give thanks to him;

...whose kindness endures forever...

PSALM 100:1B, 3AB, 4B, 5B

Scripture scholars describe this as a psalm of thanksgiving with a dominant note of joy. I'm moved by how it connects with today's Gospel where Jesus replies to the scribes and Pharisees regarding his disciples not fasting by saying: "Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" (Luke 5:34). It was a time of rejoicing.

Today's psalm expresses joy, assuring us of God's presence: "he made us, his we are." When something happens that reminds us of God's loving presence, let us "Sing joyfully to the LORD...give thanks to him...whose kindness endures forever."

Dear God, help us to be aware today of someone in need of kindness and, if possible, to give them something they need that could help them to "sing joyfully to the Lord."

■ PATRICIA LIVINGSTON

Be Reconciled

You once were alienated and hostile in mind because of evil deeds; God has now reconciled you... COLOSSIANS 1:21-22

“I believe God forgives me” is a belief that lies at the core of our Christian faith. We profess that Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins. And yet, we so often forget that God’s reconciling love calls us to be reconciled with those around us, especially those from whom we are alienated in one way or another.

St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Today, if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” Our forgiveness from God should embolden us to forgive others, to see more clearly that even our enemies and estranged family and friends are equally loved by God and made in God’s image. We are loved, forgiven sinners. In the end, we all belong to one another.

Humble me, Lord. Show me how to forgive and be reconciled.

■ STEVE GIVENS

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inspiration from our readers and writers?
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom 9:13-18b + Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17
Philemon 9-10, 12-17 + Luke 14:25-33

The Last Mile

In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple. LUKE 14:33

There's a phrase in business: the last mile. It means that the final distance of delivering goods and services to your home can be the most intricate. Going from the manufacturer to a regional hub via truck, rail, plane or ship becomes a repeatable process. But that distance to your city apartment, your suburban house or your remote ranch can be something distinct and unique.

Similarly, our journeys may become more rugged and complex as we grow in faith. Saying no to tangible possessions like ostentatious homes and fancy vehicles can seem less daunting than sacrificing time to serve those in need, laying judgment of others at the foot of the altar and remembering that, yes, God comes first, even before our own families.

And so, may we pray for the wisdom to pay less attention to worldly distractions and focus on the One who is waiting at the end of the last mile.

Lord, guide my way today and every day to the end.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Micah 5:1-4a or Romans 8:28-30 + Psalm 13:6 + Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Happy Birthday, Blessed Mary!

Let me sing of the LORD, "He has been good to me."

PSALM 13:6

Mary's Immaculate Conception is traditionally celebrated annually on December 8. So, here we are, nine months later, celebrating Mary's birth! Isn't God's good plan wondrous?

God the Father chose to send us his Son through a virgin. That prophecy came centuries before she was conceived. And then to prepare a remarkable woman to be the mother of the Son, God prepares her in the most special way. Mary is conceived without the stain and burden of Original Sin through a uniquely privileged gift of God's amazing grace. She is immaculately conceived. That is, she is *full of grace* from the moment she comes to be in the womb of her mother, and Jesus' future grandmother, Anne.

Let us sing of Mary and sing with Mary today, whom "all ages call...blessed" (Luke 1:48). For we are her children in the order of grace, and God has been good to us through her!

■ PAT GOHN

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

St. Peter Claver

Colossians 2:6-15 + Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11 + Luke 6:12-19

Rooted in Prayer

...and [Jesus] spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve... LUKE 6:12-13

How astonishingly easy it is to forget (or disdain or reject) this foundational truth and gift of our Christian faith: Everything is rooted in prayer. This means things don't depend on us—we depend on God, so God in turn can depend on us. We pray because Jesus prayed and taught us to pray. Jesus prayed because he, the Son, is one with the Father and the Spirit. Prayer is his invitation into the intimate life of the Trinity.

Prayer does not bring a problem-free life. Out of prayer, Jesus named twelve Apostles, all of whom later deserted him at Gethsemane. Prayer does offer real life, bringing God into our life and our life into God. Sometimes, prayer is simple and delightful; sometimes, it's difficult and painful; always, it is necessary. Unfailingly, it is a gift.

Call me to pray with you, Lord, throughout the night and in the dawn.

■ MARY MARROCCO

Colossians 3:1-11 + Psalm 145:2-3, 10-13 + Luke 6:20-26

‘What Is Above’

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

COLOSSIANS 3:2

As I write, Jesus stares at me from a print across the room. His right hand points upward: “Think of what is above.”

I peruse today’s First Reading, “Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry” (v. 5). Gazing back at Jesus’ picture, I’m half-tempted to hear his instructions through St. Paul as for someone else, not me. *I don’t do all that.*

I continue reading. “By these you too once conducted yourselves...But now you must put them all away: anger, fury, malice, slander, and obscene language out of your mouths. Stop lying to one another...” (vv. 7-9). Yes, *Lord, you mean these words for me too.*

While gratefully I don’t embrace *all* of the sinful actions St. Paul warns against, I’ve been there. If not careful, I still could be. My true antidote is to think about what is above, not below.

Thank you, Lord, for redirecting my thoughts toward eternity.

Lessons in Forgiveness

Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all of these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

One season, when struggling with forgiveness in an epic way, I wrote this verse out on note cards. One went by my bathroom mirror. Another by the kitchen sink. Another taped on a laundry room cabinet. It was not enough to highlight this verse in my Bible or copy it in my journal. I needed it multiple times a day.

Over time, the verse began to work on me and in me. It did not change my situation, but even better—*it changed me.*

This is how we learn that the Word of God is alive and powerful. If we seek it out, write it, pray it, repeat it and summon it, we find that it gives us access to a power greater than ourselves. Forgiveness requires such a power.

■ KRISTIN ARMSTRONG

1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14 + Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 11 + Luke 6:39-42

Send a Letter

Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus...to Timothy, my true child in faith. 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-2

In the New Testament, St. Paul wrote several letters to communities and individuals, like we see in Timothy today. We live in an age when there can be instant communication—a phone call, text or some other electronic message. When is the last time you received a letter in the mail from someone just because they wanted to send you a message?

A few friends have entered a cloistered religious order. They can only write once a year to family and friends. I treasure the letters those nuns have sent me.

Historically, we may read love letters exchanged between Ulysses S. Grant and his wife Julia. Spiritually, we can read the letters between St. Thérèse and Maurice, for example. Reading such letters allows us glimpses into these people, and we benefit from their wisdom.

Is there someone in your life who might be uplifted from a letter? Maybe today is the day to write and send a letter.

■ FR. EDWARD LOONEY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

St. John Chrysostom

1 Timothy 1:15-17 ✦ Psalm 113:1-7 ✦ Luke 6:43-49

Grace Is Sufficient

...in me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example for those who would come to believe in him for everlasting life. 1 TIMOTHY 1:16

My full-time spirituality ministry is quite humbling. Sometimes, on a day when my confidence is shaken, I may hear a voice wondering: Who do you think you are to be leading, inviting, preaching, reflecting, praying with so many people? What makes you think that you have anything to offer from your small life?

That's when this passage from Paul's letter to Timothy asserts itself and reminds me that this ministry isn't about me but about how the Holy One is visibly at work in my life, in *all* of our lives, displaying divine patience with our weakness, our hesitation, our doubting as an example of grace at work for those who would come to believe in Jesus.

■ SR. CHRIS KOELLHOFFER, I.H.M.

Sr. Chris is an author and spiritual guide who leads retreats and presentations internationally. Visit her blog, Mining the Now, at ChrisKoellhofferIHM.org.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Numbers 21:4b-9 + Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38
Philippians 2:6-11 + John 3:13-17

The Triumph of the Cross

...so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. JOHN 3:14-15

The funeral rites of the Church are some of the most beautiful liturgies I've experienced. As a young adult, when my father passed away, it was the prayers and symbols of the funeral Mass—the incense, the pall, the sprinkling with water, the sharing of Communion—that brought comfort and consolation amidst great grief.

Jesus never shies away from the reality of death. He doesn't ignore it or color it over with platitudes. He who took on our humanity confronts death head-on, accompanying those who mourn and even accepting a humiliating death on a cross.

In a culture that tries to stave off and deny death, Christians are called to stand with those who are dying or mourning by acknowledging their pain and sorrow. We are also called to offer hope in the God who stands with us and died for us so that we all might live for eternity.

■ JONATHAN F. SULLIVAN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Timothy 2:1-8 + Psalm 28:2, 7-9 + John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35

Our Lady of Sorrows

Behold, your mother. JOHN 19:27

The world's most holy and distinguished woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Honored by God with grace and beauty, Mary was also destined to be a most sorrowful mother. During his ministry, Jesus acknowledged his mother saying she was truly blessed for she was like "those who hear the word of God and observe it" (Luke 11:28). When dying on the Cross, Jesus thought of his mother. With suffering nearly unbearable, Mary stood near the Cross as her son died minute by minute.

For centuries, Mary has been extolled by theologians, historians, poets, artists, song writers and even the angels. Our voices lifted in prayer offer the Hail Mary millions of times a day. (However, I cringe when people speak of "throwing a Hail Mary" as a football pass. That call should be out of bounds.)

With deep respect and sensitivity, we honor our gentle Mother and Queen of Heaven.

Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us, your children.

■ FR. JAMES MCKARNS

God Sees and Restores

When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity... LUKE 7:13

Jesus sees a widow in a funeral procession in honor of her only son. He takes notice of her pain, tells her not to weep and then restores her son to life.

This story is such a beautiful reminder that Jesus has the power to resurrect what might feel lost forever—and he often does so without us even having to ask for his help, as is the case with the widow. He meets us in our darkest moments and deepest wounds.

What burdens are you carrying today? Maybe you feel like the widow, grieving over dreams that feel dead or struggling over circumstances beyond your control. Jesus not only sees you in your hardship; he actively meets you in the suffering. His timing and ways may not always align with our own expectations, but our human pain is no match for his deep compassion.

Lord, thank you for seeing me in my struggles and sorrow.

■ KATE WICKER

1 Timothy 3:14-16 + Psalm 111:1-6 + Luke 7:31-35

Attitude Adjustments

...you should know how to behave in the household of God... 1 TIMOTHY 3:15

Normally, I try to avoid the word *should*, treading carefully not to pass judgment on others or lay my plans, my values and my beliefs on them. I was struck by St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy, blatantly telling the Christian community they *should* do thus and so. The force of it got me pondering.

If I call myself a Christian, my behavior *should* be modeled on Christ. Do I behave as a member of God's household in my everyday encounters? Maybe I need to better evaluate my driving, or my expression of beliefs of any kind or how I judge the person who gets on the bus without paying.

Nobody lives the Christian life perfectly, but have I fallen into a kind of superiority with "I'm right; you're wrong" thinking? Wow, that is so *not* Christlike!

Thanks for the letter, Paul. I've got some thinking and behavior corrections to do!

■ JENNIFER CHRIST

Jennifer Christ volunteers as a docent at the Milwaukee Art Museum, sharing beauty and creativity with visitors.

1 Timothy 4:12-16 + Psalm 111:7-10 + Luke 7:36-50

The Gift of Tears

...she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. LUKE 7:38

It has been thirty years since the Murrah Building bombing in Oklahoma City, an event that I covered as an on-site journalist. Four years later, I was asked to write the historical marker for an outdoor statue of Jesus built across the street from what is now the Oklahoma City National Memorial. Titled “And Jesus Wept,” it appropriately presents our Lord with head bowed, covering his tearful face.

All human suffering is sacred to God, no matter how trivial we may think it is or how vast and overwhelming. As Pope Francis notes, “It is good for me, in difficult moments, to think of Jesus weeping...God has wept for me, God weeps. He weeps over our suffering...to think that Jesus weeps with me in suffering is a consolation: it helps us keep going.” To God, we are not strangers or numbers, we are faces and hearts. What do I need to bring to Jesus with my tears today?

■ MARÍA RUIZ SCAPERLANDA

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

St. Januarius

1 Timothy 6:2c-12 + Psalm 49:6-10, 17-20 + Luke 8:1-3

‘The Root’

For the love of money is the root of all evils... 1 TIMOTHY 6:10

Society tends to measure value with dollar signs. Our “heroes” are CEOs, sports figures and entertainers who make extraordinary amounts of money. Wealth is too often our measure of social status and importance. As a result, it is easy to be dissatisfied when it seems like so many people have all the security and power that comes with wealth while we may struggle to provide for our families. It is easy to believe money is the key to happiness.

Such envy and dissatisfaction are nothing new. Great disparities of wealth were known in the first century too. Paul’s letter to Timothy is a blunt warning that Christians should not be seduced by love of money. “For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that” (1 Timothy 6:7-8).

Holy Spirit, help me to count my blessings and be content with them.

■ GREG ERLANDSON

*Greg Erlandson is a husband,
father of four and a writer.*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Sts. Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn
and Paul Chŏng Ha-sang and Companions

1 Timothy 6:13-16 ✦ Psalm 100:1-5 ✦ Luke 8:4-15

Cultivation

But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance. LUKE 8:15

I grew up on a farm in Iowa where the sowing of seed was steady and calculated. We'd plant our vegetables in neat rows. Fields were maintained by educated farmers who understood the science of agronomy. So, it's tough for me to picture seeds sown by hand, seemingly without regard to where they fall: on the path, thorny soil, rocky ground and rich soil.

Jesus' parable of the sower shows us that each of us is invited to be part of God's landscape, to use our agency to say "yes" to being generous and open. If, cooperating with God's grace, we cultivate our soil to support the richness of life in Christ, God's Word will transform us, and new life will spring forth.

O Word of God, take root in my life so that I bear fruit that glorifies your Name.

■ SR. JULIA WALSH, F.S.P.A.

Amos 8:4-7 + Psalm 113:1-2, 4-8 + 1 Timothy 2:1-8 + Luke 16:1-13

‘Children of Light’

For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

LUKE 16:8

Many of Jesus’ parables are intended to catch us off guard. Today’s parable is certainly one of them. How to make sense of a manager of his boss’ property, down on his luck, who bilks his boss and, alas, ends up receiving the boss’ praise?

It’s called prudence. The manager is admired for sizing up his situation correctly and acting decisively to save the day—or, in this instance, to save his own skin. This is how the children of this world—or at least the most clever of them—make their way through life.

How much more, Jesus says, should the children of light guard their eternal possessions? It may not top the list in our own examination of conscience, but how enterprising are we in the deployment of the gifts we have received?

■ FR. DENNIS GALLAGHER, A.A.

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Little Pictures

Take care, then, how you hear. LUKE 8:18

My six-year-old daughter once sassied me with quite a disrespectful remark. Kindness was always foremost in our home, so it seemed out of the blue. I said to her, “Rose, *where* did you hear that?” She replied, “The cable channel!” I was relaying the story to my mother that evening, and she replied, “Ah, yes...little pictures.” From that day on, that cable channel was banned from our house.

All the “little pictures” we take in daily with our eyes, ears and hearts are important. Are we giving ear to what is lovely and true, lasting and good? Or are we giving ear to what is gossip or misinformation? Are we paying more of our attention to the eternal promises of God or the temporal wants of the world? Amid darkness, it is up to us to seek the light and reflect that light to a world in need of better things. God, give me ears to listen, and your goodness to share.

■ SARAH HART

Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20 + Psalm 122:1-5 + Luke 8:19-21

Room for Us

I rejoiced because they said to me,

“We will go up to the house of the LORD.” PSALM 122:1

Last year, I visited the great Cathedral of Notre Dame. Not the one in Paris but a few dozen miles to the east in Reims. It's historic—for centuries the kings of France were crowned there—and enormous, even larger than its Parisian sister.

I arrived about thirty minutes before closing. There were a few of us stragglers wandering about in the cavernous, dusky space. In one corner, two men stood at a bank of flickering candles, lighting their own.

I thought: In this enormous, strange, unpredictable universe, there is a quiet, solid place of comfort, and in that place, even though it rises high above us as well, there is, amazingly, room for each person. We rejoice because we know in the Lord's house—that has no walls at all—there is a room for each of us with our joys and burdens—always.

Rejoicing, I enter your house of mercy and love, Lord.

■ AMY WELBORN

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
25th Week in Ordinary Time

Ezra 9:5-9 ✦ Tobit 13:2-4, 7-8 ✦ Luke 9:1-6

Good News: Ever Good and Ever New

*Then they set out and went from village to village
proclaiming the Good News and curing diseases
everywhere.* LUKE 9:6

It is worthwhile to reflect on how the phrase “Good News” in reference to the Gospel means what it implies: that Jesus’ words are always good and always new. When we consider the term news in the journalistic sense, we understand that the news outlets are providing readers with information that is fresh and innovative. So, too, are Jesus’ teachings as “new” now as they were 2,000 years ago. Even better, his words remain “good” in the truest possible way.

It is now either the fall in the northern hemisphere or the spring in the southern hemisphere, times of change around the globe. But no matter the season of the year or of our life, we should look for unique chances to bring the Good News of Jesus into a spiritually wounded and heartsick world.

Lord Jesus, grant us the courage to spread your Good News with faithfulness and courage.

■ MR. JUSTIN MCCLAIN, O.P.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
25th Week in Ordinary Time

Haggai 1:1-8 + Psalm 149:1-6, 9 + Luke 9:7-9

Seeking Jesus

...he kept trying to see him. LUKE 9:9

Herod hears all kinds of stories about Jesus, stories that leave him “perplexed.” Some people say Jesus is John raised from the dead, but Herod doesn’t believe that because he had John beheaded. Or maybe that Jesus is the prophet Elijah returning to earth. Herod’s perplexity evolves into a persistent curiosity, one that keeps pressing him to see Jesus for himself.

In some ways, we are not that different from Herod. In our desire to know Jesus, we listen to what others say about him. We ponder the Gospels that give us glimpses into his life and teachings. But sooner or later, we desire to meet Jesus in person—that is, in our prayer, in the Eucharist and in the simple or complex circumstances of our daily life. This search for Jesus is never-ending. It is our life-long quest.

Jesus, help me to keep seeking you every day of my life.

■ SR. MELANNIE SVOBODA, S.N.D.

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Beyond Words

...he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

LUKE 9:18

He couldn't have been any more blunt. In a moment of private prayer, hidden from anyone else, Jesus chose to go *there*: He asked his disciples a defining question: "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And then, more directly, "Who do *you* say that I am?" (See verse 20.) He wanted to know, "What do you *say* about me?"

Well? How do we put into words something, someone, almost beyond words? What can we say?

Jesus' message at the end of this passage—don't tell anyone!—challenges his disciples too (v. 21), as they were later instructed to take this message to the whole world! Let's consider our own witness: Often the most powerful evangelization doesn't come only with what we say but with what we do—simply being the best Christian possible—sometimes silently.

We've all heard that actions speak louder than words. What are we saying about Christ with our *actions*? With our *lives*?

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

St. Vincent de Paul

Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a ✦ Jeremiah 31:10-13 ✦ Luke 9:43b-45

God Dwells With Us

...and they shall be his people and he will dwell among you.

ZECHARIAH 2:15A

“Where is God?” The Israelites questioned how and when God would be present in their midst. And time and time again, they were assured that the divine presence would not be found in abstract statements or lofty ideas about God. Rather, God desired to dwell among the people, to walk closely with them, to accompany them on every step on the pilgrimage of life.

To encounter the living God who dwells among us is the joy of living faith.

God’s promises to Israel are deeply comforting. “Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD” (v. 14). God fulfills this divine promise perfectly in sending his divine son Jesus to dwell with us as one of us!

Jesus continues this divine indwelling with humanity in the supreme gift of his divine presence in Word and Sacrament, especially in the Eucharist. Where do you encounter the close indwelling and loving presence of God?

■ JEM SULLIVAN, PH.D.

Amos 6:1a, 4-7 + Psalm 146:7-10 + 1 Timothy 6:11-16 + Luke 16:19-31

Someone From the Dead

Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent. LUKE 16:30

Many books have been written, and many movies made, that purport to prove the existence of life after death and attempt to illustrate what the afterlife might be like. Of course, these imaginative musings are feeble attempts to conjure what cannot be conjured. Even the most faith-filled attempts to show a glimpse of eternity will fall short.

But that doesn't mean we can't show others what a life transformed by Christ looks like. That we can do in the here and now. As forgiven sinners and people of deep faith, we can be like "someone from the dead." Our lives have already been transformed through the power and promise of Jesus' death and resurrection. Even now, as we await our ultimate glorious resurrection, we must live in ways that show others how we have been taken from the dead and brought to new life.

Who in your life needs to hear your resurrection story?

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12ab
Psalm 138:1-5 + John 1:47-51

An Interest in Angels

In the presence of the angels I will sing your praise.

PSALM 138:1

There is a resurgence of an interest in angels, particularly in St. Michael. I think this is, at least partly, a good thing. We humans have an innate thirst for the spiritual world. Angels are a strong connection to that reality.

But there can also be a downside. Some today have lost a belief in the one God yet cling to belief in the angelic world. For example, there is a new age fascination with “angel numbers,” seeing meaning in repeating numerical sequences. This is a form of numerology that, while sounding biblical, is not.

Throughout the Scriptures, we read of the angels’ real emphasis on praising God and doing his will. They remind us that they are servants of God. To God alone praise belongs.

Let us love angels, beautiful beings who often help us. We give special thanks for St. Michael, Protector of God’s People. We join with them in praising the one true God.

■ MSGR. STEPHEN J. ROSSETTI

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

St. Jerome

Zechariah 8:20-23 + Psalm 87:1-7 + Luke 9:51-56

Giving Witness

Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

ZECHARIAH 8:23

Hopefully, our lives have intersected with people whose very being radiates compassion and welcome and a lifetime given over to following Jesus in love. People who not only speak but also embody the spirit of discipleship, no matter the sacrifice and deep inner soul work that such following requires. These intersections can draw out of us a longing to continually learn from these wisdom figures and a desire to be in their company: “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

Each of us is called by the Holy One to be that same kind of witness to our world. Who or what we are in love with influences our choices, what we say and do, what we give our attention to and where we spend our time.

Holy One, may my every action today witness to your presence in my life.

■ SR. CHRIS KOELLHOFFER, I.H.M.

Prayers & Blessings

Morning Prayers

Father in heaven, draw me near to you today. You are my origin and my true destination. Thank you for making me your beloved child with a home in your family. I greet this day with the knowledge that you love me. May I be led by your divine Providence every hour, and every moment, confidently trusting in your love today. **AMEN.**

Good morning, Jesus! You are the way, truth and life. Your way is the perfect path for my day. Your truth is all I need to know. Your life offers me salvation and the promise of heaven. May I make my life a gift to you and to the people you invite me to serve today. Help me to avoid temptations and walk in virtue, guided by your Presence. **AMEN.**

Come, Holy Spirit, shine your light on me in the morning. Help me to rise and give glory to God. Then, send your help so that I may serve God with joy by loving and serving others this day. Let my smile be your radiance. Let my words be your kindness. May my actions reflect your goodness. **AMEN.**

Prayers & Blessings

Evening Prayers

Father in heaven, I come to take my rest. You saw everything about my day today. Allow me to lay it all before you. You know my strivings, my good actions and my failings. Help me to grow and learn from my mistakes and give you the glory for what went right. Send me your peace and restore me by sleep to wake and serve you anew tomorrow. **AMEN.**

Jesus, Lord of the Day and the Night, I come to you with all that is in my heart. As evening comes, I seek your blessing and help: to reflect on the day and bring to light what was profitable for my growth and those moments that hindered it. Help me to release any worries to your care and sleep in peace. **AMEN.**

Holy Spirit, you are my silent Advocate. Thank you for working in my day. Watch over all my loved ones and all the situations that I bring to you now. Inspire in me the desire to be renewed in love and grace, and to live for Christ more fully, as I look forward to the hope of a new day and the beauty of the life to come. **AMEN.**

Prayers & Blessings

For Families

St. Maximilian Kolbe, you gave your life so that a family might not be deprived of a husband and father. By your heroic martyrdom of charity, teach us that the value of family life is worth our sacrifices also. Just as you found in Mary the channel of those graces that strengthened you to be faithful to her Son, help us to rejoice also in her who was given to us as a mother by Jesus from the Cross. Be with us, St. Maximilian, as we pray for the special needs of our family [insert petitions here]. **AMEN.**

Lord, Take Me...

Lord, take me where you want me to go; let me meet who you want me to meet; tell me what you want me to say; and keep me out of your way. **AMEN.**

FR. MYCHAL JUDGE, FDNY, who died 9/11/01

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Acknowledgments

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Prayer Prompt

Make a Spiritual Pilgrimage

Making a pilgrimage is a time-honored spiritual practice. During this Jubilee, many Catholics are embarking to Rome to pray, reflect and seek God's will in their lives by visiting the famous basilicas and other religious sites. Well-known pilgrimage sites include Jerusalem and the Holy Lands, walking the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James) in Spain and Marian shrines such as Guadalupe in Mexico, Fatima in Portugal or Lourdes in France.

A pilgrimage is more than a vacation or tour. Here's why!

A pilgrimage brings spiritual benefits. Begin with the end in mind: How might your pilgrimage bring you closer to God? Think of it as a specialized retreat, an opportunity to come away and encounter God and his love. It's also a time to share your faith and experiences with fellow pilgrims.

Discover what opportunities for the sacraments might be available not only at your destination but also along the way. Look for opportunities for prayer and penitence: go to confession, attend Mass, make sacrifices and pray in unique and sacred spaces as you make the journey.

A pilgrimage opens our minds and hearts to learning.

Maybe the site or location has biblical significance, like the Holy Lands being where Jesus walked the earth. Or perhaps the site is a shrine or basilica dedicated to a special event in history or a particular saint, like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, or the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in New York or one the missions founded by St. Junípero Serra in California? Learning about our heroes in faith—the communion of saints—and the places they lived and traveled offers inspiration for our own lives.

A pilgrimage offers discernment and reflection. It can offer the time and space to ask God about some of our big questions. And to seek what God might be asking of us. Walking a pilgrimage path invites us to grasp hold of priorities and release things we no longer need to carry.

A pilgrimage can be long or short, far away or local. See what your means and state in life allows. Travel to a different country might be worthwhile, but the cost of such may take years to save for. In the meantime, ask God to point you in the direction of local destinations. There are hundreds of potential shrines and churches in the U.S. that would be good pilgrimage destinations for a weekend or a day trip.

*Did you know that Living Faith now sponsors pilgrimages?
Visit LivingFaith.com/pilgrimages.*



'You are a sign of Christ's nearness to those in need of hope'

When Pope Francis addressed a group of prison chaplains, he asked them to let prisoners know that he prays for them. The Holy Father went on to remind chaplains that they "are a sign of Christ's nearness to [those]...in need of hope."



We encourage you, too, to pray for incarcerated women and men. The *Living Faith* Foundation also aids: Families in Need and Military Personnel. By supporting the work of the *Living Faith* Foundation, you will also be "a sign of Christ's nearness" to those in need.



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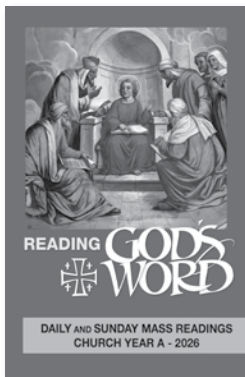
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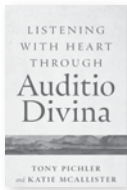


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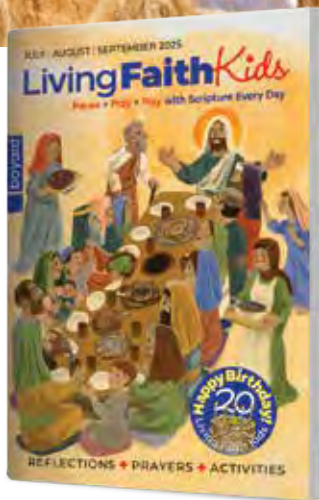
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