

[Online Ministries Home Page](#) | [Daily Reflections](#) | [Online Retreat](#) | [Stations of the Cross](#) | [Practical Spirituality](#) | [Spirituality Links](#)

[Return to the Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer](#) | [Tell a Friend about these Weekly Guides](#)

[Visit the Daily Reflections Each Day This Week](#)

[PDF of this page](#)

The Twenty-Sixth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear Paul exhorting the **Philippians**, "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus," offering us a powerful image of Jesus' humble, self-less service. In **Matthew's Gospel** Jesus challenges the chief priests and elders of the people, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul**. Thursday is the **Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels**. Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Jerome, priest and doctor of the Church**. Saturday is the **Memorial of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin and doctor of the Church**.

The first readings continue with the prophet **Zechariah** of the period of recovery after the exile. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice." The **Book of Nehemiah**, like Ezra, chronicles this history. The prophet **Baruch** gives us a prayer of the people in captivity and God's reply, "Fear not, my children; call out to God!"

We continue reading **Luke's Gospel**, as the disciples argue about who is the greatest. Jesus points out a young child and asks them to strive to be the "least" not the greatest. Jesus stops his disciples from preventing people, not of their group, from healing, because they are with Jesus, too. He stops the disciples from "calling down fire from heaven" on the Samaritan people who didn't give them a good reception. People come up, offering to follow Jesus, but have excuses for why they can't do it now. Jesus calls them to not "look back" once they have said, "yes." Jesus warns the people blessed by the graces of his visits there, but who have not changed their ways. He prays, "I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."

On the **Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear Jesus really challenge the religious leaders with the parable of the tenant farmers who were entrusted with their master's fields but refused to listen to his servants (the prophets) and abused and killed his son (Jesus) in an attempt to usurp his inheritance. Jesus tells them, "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a wonderful week of saints and readings. We start off the week with the attitude and way of Jesus, in Philippians 2:1-11. We can learn from the humble servant, Vincent de Paul who saw Jesus in the poor so much so that he said the streets were chapels for him to find God. This saint, who said that when he pulled a thorn from a beggar's foot he removed it from the foot of Jesus, inspired Blessed Theresa of Calcutta. We celebrate the Little Flower this week, too. Thérèse lived such a simple, humble life, growing in holiness in her "little way" of accepting lovingly even the little slights from and burdens of her fellow sisters. Of course, the archangels are pure servants of God.

This week we can ask for the desire to become the least, not the greatest, in ways that applies to us. We can ask to experience humility and grace in the real limits we experience in our lives. All of us have some places where we come to know our humanity and are brought to our knees: perhaps we continue to be judgmental of others, after asking for forgiveness ourselves; we keep falling into the same temptations; we present ourselves one way in public, but act a very different way with those closest to us; we never get around to acts of generosity and charity, perhaps even to our parents.

We can all begin our mornings with our own version of this prayer: "Lord, help me to be more simple, authentic, transparent and trusting today. I don't want to try to be someone else." We might ask, "Help me not 'look back' today, Lord" or "Lord, I need your help today to be more accepting of others who are different. Help me to see you in those who suffer or struggle in any way."

Throughout the day this week, we can take brief moments, in the background of our consciousness, while driving, going to a meeting, shopping, doing laundry, to repeat and deepen these prayers. And, may our God send prophets and angels and his own Son to help us find intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives.

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