

The LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity, continuing his kindness for a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness and crime and sin...  
- Exodus 33

## Seventeenth Week of Ordinary Time: July 25-31, 2010

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### Seventeenth Week of Ordinary Time

The **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** begins with a reading from **Genesis**. Abraham pleads for compassion for those few innocent people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God promises him, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it." Jesus teaches us to pray in the reading from **Luke's gospel**, using the familiar words, "Father, hallowed be your name." He urges us to be persistent in our prayer: "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Martha**. Saturday is a special day at Creighton University and at Jesuit ministries around the world as we celebrate the **Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola**, who founded the Society of Jesus and gave his great gift of the *Spiritual Exercises* to the Church.

The first readings this week continue to be from the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah**. Jeremiah delivers God's messages about the laxity of the rulers. It is a powerful call to conversion for all of us today.

We continue to read from **Matthew's Gospel** this week, entering into sayings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. God's reign is like mustard seeds and it is like yeast. It's coming and growth is small and slow, but it is assured. It may be compared to a field where an enemy sowed weeds among the good seed. Jesus knows the world is full of both the children of God, and also the children of the Evil One - mixed together. We need not worry. It is God

### Daily Prayer This Week

This whole week could be a time for each of us to grow in a sense of what we most deeply desire. If we let Sunday's gospel open our hearts we might find ourselves asking, begging God for what we need.

And we can let the daily gospels renew our hope. Have we become cynical and jaded a bit? The world does seem to be like a field someone sowed weeds into. The growth of God's reign in this world doesn't seem to be growing, and the seeds seem so small. This is a good week to get in touch with what is discouraged in our hearts and to let the courage the Lord is offering us renew us. He promises that even small seeds work and that even a little yeast allows dough to grow. The process is sometimes imperceptible, but that's why Jesus reminds us to place our trust in him. Our own hearts might be full of weeds, but the Lord doesn't want us ripping ourselves apart. He is full of mercy and healing reconciliation. Jesus does not want us to be scandalized by the evil we see in the world. God is patient. And, God alone will judge.

So every day this week, we can begin our day, establishing a focus. This might be while standing next to our bed for a brief minute, or while pouring ourselves a cup of coffee, or while in the shower or getting dressed. This is the time that can transform any busy day into a more focused time of connection with our Lord. Using all sorts of background times throughout the day will take no "extra" time for prayer, but will make it possible to let these powerful scriptures interact with the daily events and

who will judge at the end of time. The Kingdom is like a buried treasure or a merchant's search for a really fine pearl. It is worth investing all we have in it. The Kingdom is like the net used for fishing which gathers everything in it. At the end of time God will gather all to separate the good from the evil. We hear that Jesus could not work miracles in his home town, because of their lack of faith in him. They thought they knew him and therefore took him for granted. Herod arrested John because John's preaching was bothering his conscience. He had John beheaded to honor a drunken promise to his niece and an oath to impress his guests.

The week begins with the **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. The first reading from Ecclesiastes offers a powerful caution about focusing too much on the things of this world: "Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!" In **Luke's gospel** Jesus tells the parable of the rich man storing up treasures for the future, and he warns, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

relationships with which we are involved.

One morning we might begin our day, simply by saying, "Lord, thank you for this day. Help me to pay attention to what and who I'm treasuring today." Or, "Lord, be with me this day and help me check my need to judge others. Help me place my trust in you today." While in the shower or going to work I might talk with the Lord about the day ahead, asking for particular help, focus, or a new way of valuing during that difficult 10 a.m. meeting or with the clients or students or patients I will see. While doing the wash or shopping or preparing meals or while taking time with my family or friends in the evening, I can let myself have these 30 second friend-to-friend conversations with the Lord. The readings provide a compass for our daily journey, but it is the continual practice at connecting with our Lord that carries us through the day. Looking back and saying "thank you" every night, if even for 30 seconds, will gradually transform us and give us more courage and hope.

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