

For the vision still has its time,
 presses on to fulfillment, and will not
 disappoint;
 If it delays, wait for it,
 it will surely come, it will not be late.
 - Habakkuk 2

Eighteenth Week of Ordinary Time: Aug. 1-7, 2010

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Eighteenth Week of Ordinary Time

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."

Wednesday is the **Memorial of Saint John Vianney, priest**. Friday is the **Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord**, with its own special readings.

This week we complete our readings from the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah**. Friday and Saturday have the consoling readings from the **Prophet Nahum** and the **Prophet Habakkuk**, "the vision still has its time."

In **Matthew's Gospel** this week we hear some marvelous words about faith and discipleship. Monday is **Matthew's** version of the Miracle of the loaves and fishes. On Tuesday there is the choice between two gospels: Jesus comes to his disciples across the water in a storm, and invites Peter to come to him, across the water; when Peter comes he takes his eyes off Jesus and goes down. In the other Gospel option, the Pharisee asks why Jesus' disciples don't follow the dietary laws and Jesus says, "It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one." In contrast to the lack of faith of the religious leaders, Jesus delights

Daily Prayer This Week

This week we can ask, in the variety of ways and situations each day, that our eyes might be opened to see Jesus as he really is - glorified, with the Father, and ready to renew our faith and trust in him.

As we begin our day, and at brief times throughout our day, we can pull our consciousness together by letting the themes of this week's reading guide us. One day, we might ask to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as we go through a day full of strong wind and waves. We can ask again and again, as things get tougher and more challenging.

Another day, we might focus on what comes out of our mouths. Is there cynicism, judgments, distortions of the truth, divisive and self-serving manipulation, yelling and hurtful put-downs? Do I practice using my voice to give praise to God by affirming others, forgiving them, by telling the truth, by defending the poor and the voiceless, by giving God thanks? Another day, I might be conscious of those I regard as "dogs," those I disdain or think of as "the enemy." I might ask for the grace to open my heart to whatever faith in God they have, however different from mine. I might ask for a sense of solidarity with them, not because it is my desire or inclination, but because it is God's desire for me.

How can I heal and reconcile, at least in my heart, what needs healing: racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, negative stereotypes towards Muslims and foreigners, hostility against the poor, being judgemental about sinners. Later in the week, we can get in touch with the call

in the faith and trust of a non-Jew, a woman in the enemy Gentile territory to the north. Jesus sums up our discipleship wonderfully: *“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?”* The disciples wonder why they could not drive out a demon from a boy, Jesus answers, “Because of your little faith.” Faith “the size of a mustard seed” is enough.

Sunday is the **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. In **Luke's Gospel**, Jesus cautions us to be ready for the coming of the Lord. “Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.”

of Jesus to deny ourselves. This is not self-denial for its own sake. This is the dying to self that comes from loving in the self-sacrificing way that Jesus did.

Who in my family, friends, relative, co-workers, members of my parish or congregation need my self-denying love? How have I focused on “gaining the world” and lost some of my true self in the process? Is there some way this week that I can taste discovering my true self in giving some time, some compassion, some love, some special care to someone who needs this from me?

And throughout the week, perhaps at a special time of powerlessness or some time when I feel that I don't have the energy or gifts to do the “more,” to move a mountain, I can ask for faith the size of a mustard seed. And, each night I can give thanks to God for being generous to me all week, for this simple focus on our relationship every day.

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