

Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”
When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.
- Matthew 19

Twentieth Week of Ordinary Time: Aug. 15-21, 2010

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Twentieth Week of Ordinary Time

Sunday, the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** takes the place of the Ordinary Time readings. The two options from the Gospel of Luke depict either the Visitation: “How does this happen, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” or Mary's beautiful response to her cousin Elizabeth: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Bernard, abbot and doctor of the Church**. Saturday is the **Memorial of Pius X, pope**.

We continue reading from the **Book of the Prophet Ezekiel**. We are treated to some of the best of Ezekiel's prophesy this week. He is sharp and biting in his calls for conversion and comforting in his prophesy about God's fidelity and mercy, especially in the field of dry bones that come to life.

In this week's selection from **Matthew's Gospel** we read some wonderful words of Jesus about being his follower. A young man who was wealthy asks about gaining eternal life. Jesus tells him to follow the commandments. When the man says he wants to be perfect, Jesus says, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When Jesus tells his disciples how hard it is for the rich to be saved, his disciples worry, but he says “for God all things are possible.” Jesus says there

Daily Prayer This Week

We pray through our everyday life this week, with the image in the background of our consciousness: Jesus offers us intimacy with him and gives us life, as shown in our relationship with him in the gospels.

Each day, we begin our day with the practice of briefly pausing, at our bedside to focus the day with a 15-30 second prayer. It is so helpful to develop this habit by simply doing it three or four days in a row. Even if we say that we are half-awake at this time, we can discover what a difference this way of beginning the day can be. With practice, it gets easier to say, “Thank you for this day, Lord. Please, be with me today, especially when I do _____ this morning and this afternoon as I _____. Give me more patience, love and trust in you.” While washing up and dressing, we can expand this prayer, in a simple friend-to-friend conversation with our Lord. This kind of connecting or checking-in with our Lord at the beginning of the day, lets a background connection with our Lord develop and grow, while I'm doing many things. It changes our consciousness and connects and integrates this fundamental relationship I desire with the things I'm doing, whether they are pleasant, routine or quite difficult.

Throughout the week I might be thinking of what it would mean for me to sell what I have, give it to the poor, and really follow Jesus. What is preventing me from following the Lord more completely? Are there “riches”

will be a great turning of the tables - the last being the first and the first falling to last place. But, he tells them the parable of the landowner who hires workers throughout the day, including the last hours. When he pays them all the same, those who worked all day grumbled. "Are you envious because I am generous?" Jesus says again, "The last will be first, and the first will be last." A king gives a wedding banquet for his son but many were too busy to come. Others killed the servants who carried the invitation. "Many are invited, but few are chosen." When asked the greatest commandment he gives the double command of loving God and neighbor. Jesus warns against the self-serving ways of the religious elite. He says, "The greatest among you must be your servant."

On the **Twenty-First Sunday of Ordinary Time** Jesus cautions us about the difficulty of the Christian life, saying many will be unable to "enter through the narrow gate." Jesus indicates it is those we do not expect who will be the first in the Kingdom: "Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

that I know are barriers to my surrendering to God's will more freely? What seems to possess me? Recognizing our lack of freedom in this area or that is the first step in being able to ask our Lord for the grace of freedom in that area.

We might also ask the Lord to show us what he desires that we be "free for." "Freedom from" is the first part of our relationship. Then, we are free to be sent. What am I being freed for? What loving am I being freed for? What new generosity, what type of self-giving? What neighbor, in my family, or the poor of the world, am I being called to notice and serve? We might ask the Lord to reveal to us this week how we are called to be servant.

We will still do what is on our schedule, respond to all our commitments. The difference will be that we will do it more in touch with the Lord. Staying focused and connecting with our Lord throughout the day is at the heart of prayer, "Raising our minds and hearts to God." And, at the end of each day, we give thanks for this gifted presence that day.

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