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The Eighth Week of Ordinary Time

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

We begin this week's reflections with the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**. Our God is a God of relationship, of love, and for us.

This week we taste the Wisdom tradition through the **Book of Sirach**. We receive instruction for doing what is right, acting justly, in beautiful poetic expression. We read prayers begging God to stay faithful and to fulfill the prophecies of old. Songs extol God's eternal and everlasting wisdom, the godly and wise ancestors, and praise Wisdom personified as teacher.

In our gospels this week we are following the last part of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem in **Mark's Gospel**. After struggling to heal the blind man at the beginning of his journey, Jesus heads to Jerusalem predicting his passion to his disciples. They misunderstand his mission and so he instructs them on discipleship. This week we meet a rich young man along the road, experience the third of those predictions and teachings on discipleship and encounter the immediate cure of the blind man, Bartimaeus, who follows Jesus to Jerusalem. Finally, in the temple, we see the opposition Jesus faces and hear his promises to his disciples.

We are heading to the great **Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ** next Sunday. (It's the 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time for the rest of the world - building on a firm foundation, rather than sand; and the celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ is on Thursday.) In the year of the Eucharist, this week is a great preparation for our journey with Jesus more deeply into the mystery of self-giving love.

*"I am the living bread that came
down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live
forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world."*

Daily Prayer This Week

This late May week of Ordinary Time can be a great time for us to reflect upon the journey that each of us are on. We are on the road with Jesus and we sometimes seem to be partially blind. We hear him describe for us how much he wants us to be intimately involved in his self-giving love for others, yet our everyday concerns are too often self-absorbed. And, for the big decisions and small choices we continually face, we seek wisdom, clarity, the path that is just, honorable, even heroic. The readings for this week really can help us shape the desires we talk with our Lord about in the background of our daily journey each day.

We can start by asking for the grace not to be possessed by our possessions. A simple look around will help us get in touch with how attached we are to things that limit our availability to more completely follow Jesus. Even when we know how rewarding it is to follow our Lord, we are tempted to turn it into a temptation. Who doesn't ask, "Who is the greatest?" We need grace this week to be renewed in our conviction that our mission is as servants, placing ourselves at the needs of others before our own. It is difficult to know what we are unable to see. We can ask Jesus to heal our blindness and to allow us to follow him on the road, especially when it leads us to Jerusalem - taking up our crosses, out of grateful love.

Sometimes, the most ordinary of weeks can carry the deepest graces. The "work" we do to "place ourselves" in grace-filled situations is all about focus. It starts in the morning, in getting ourselves to a place in which we can name a need, a desire, which might not be very obvious, even though it is sitting in the center of our hearts. It takes a little practice to get good at this self-examination and humble openness to grace. After a while, it is so fulfilling, because it is so real.

One part of the joy of this journey is coming to realize, to experience personally, that the God I desire to find/experience intimacy with is trying so hard to be in an intimate relationship with me. In every Ordinary Time life, there are "good days" and "bad days," but in this type of daily prayer, none of our days are ever alone.

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