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The Twelfth Week of Ordinary Time

*Jesus said:
"Fear no one."*

On the **Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time** we can be consoled as Jesus tells us we don't have to fear anyone. God will take care of us, so we can be courageous in proclaiming this Good News to others.

The first reading all week is a three week journey through the **Book of Genesis** and begins with the call of Abram and his wife Sarai. Abraham and Lot split up. God makes a covenant with heirless Abraham, promising a son and that he would be the father of as many people as the stars of the sky.

In the gospels this week we read the last part of the **Sermon on the Mount** in **Matthew**. In the same way he has before, Jesus calls us deeper. We are not to judge so that we ourselves won't be judged. We are to be fair in treating others if we want to be treated fairly. We have to get the freedom to recognize our own faults before we try to remove others'. We are to care for others, as we would wish to be cared for. In all we do, the path we are to follow is a "narrow" one - which few seek out. Our security will come from building our lives on the solid rock of God's promises to us, rather than on the shifting sands of what the world might promise us. The week ends with Jesus going forth to heal:

*He took away our infirmities
and bore our diseases.*

Tuesday is the memorial of the great Jesuit saint, **Aloysius Gonzaga**, the patron saint of youth. Thursday is the **Solemnity of the Birth of John the Baptist**. It is a great story to hear and feel the connection between the faith of Abraham and Sarah, and their being given a special child, and then the faith and fidelity of Elizabeth and Mary, in accepting God's fidelity to them.

All of this leads us to the **Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time** in which we read the story of Elisha the prophet announcing a miraculous birth to a faithful woman. Jesus calls us to lose our lives for

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a great week to reflect on several wonderful elements of the Word this week and to let them interact with genuine desires in our hearts - desires that carry over from previous weeks or desires that are just coming to our awareness.

We can reflect upon our call - the vocation we find ourselves in, the ways we live it and are faithful to it. We can be comforted by Jesus telling us that fear is what gets in the way of our freedom to be a witness of the Good News for others. Fear comes in so many forms. Sometimes, when we are angry a lot, or finding ourselves to be more and more defensive, we can trace the anxiety or insecurity back to a particular fear or a general fear. How liberating it can be for us to pray for the grace to be fear-less, especially in the concrete ways that will come to us in our everyday life this week.

And it is good to recognize the traps that sabotage us in our everyday relationships and daily choices. Judging others is an easy trap for people trying to be good. It is so easy for me to notice when you aren't as good as I'm trying to be. The end result is I'm trapped, and fail to recognize my own ways of failing to love. If only we could love others, at least in the same way we crave to be loved! In the culture we live in, the way Jesus describes to us is clearly through the "narrow" gate. And, when I don't sort through my various and sometimes conflicting desires, it feels like my life is built upon sand. When the going gets tough, I have nothing to fall back upon.

The week ends with a picture of Jesus, the healer. Perhaps by the end of the week, the brief conversations we have with Jesus, in the midst of our daily life, will reveal desires for healing. Jesus always wants to show us how he can make us whole. He always wants us to be able to receive gifts, which we in turn can share with others.

All of us can find grace in some part of the Abraham and Sarah, Zachariah and Elizabeth stories. Who among us doesn't feel that we are unable, too old, not religious enough, not strong enough, not ready, held back in some way from bringing forth life or fulfilling our vocation? This week is a good reminder that "nothing is impossible with God." Each night this week, we can recall what we've talked about, asked for and received,

his sake.

and we can give thanks.

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