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## The Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time

*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart."*

The **Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time** begins with a Sunday that offers pastoral comfort to us all. In the **Zechariah** reading, the Lord promises Israel, and us, a savior who "shall proclaim peace to the nations." **Matthew's gospel** points to Jesus as the source of that peace, as he affirms his identity as the Son of God. Jesus offers himself as a relief from the burdens of our days, promising "you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

We continue with the final week of a three-week cycle of **Genesis** readings. Jacob stops for the night and has a vivid dream about a stairway to heaven and the Lord telling him that the land on which he rests would be given to Jacob and his descendants. Jacob wrestles with a stranger in the night and is blessed by that stranger before they part.

The readings then jump ahead 10 chapters to pick up the familiar story of the famine and Joseph, Jacob's son who has been sold into slavery by his brothers. Joseph is now a powerful man in Egypt managing food in a starving world, and his brothers, are sent by their father to Egypt to beg for food. Joseph meets with his brothers finally reveals himself to them and is reunited with his now-elderly father, Jacob, who comes to Egypt. Jacob dies a happy man, asking only that his family take his body back to their homeland for burial. The readings end as Joseph dies in Egypt, also asking to be buried in the land of his birth. It's a great story of God's fidelity.

**Matthew's gospel** this week is filled with healing and invitations. Jesus offers a cure and courage for the woman with hemorrhage, raises an

## Daily Prayer This Week

As Jesus heals, he gives courage. As he carries out his ministry of healing and announcing the terrific news of the closeness of the Kingdom of God, he is filled with compassion for all those who suffer and who need this encouraging news. So Jesus calls us to join him. This isn't the call to priesthood or religious life. This is the universal call addressed to all of us to see with his own compassionate eyes and to reach out and heal others. As Jesus sends us, he knows that we will encounter resistance and opposition - sometimes from within our own heart first, but certainly from others. He always tells us not to be afraid. Even when things happen that take away our peace, our peace will be given back to us. He knows he is sending us like sheep among the wolves of this world, and so he to be both wise and simple - two great gifts for our mission. He assures us that even when we don't know how to speak tender or reconciling words, the Spirit will speak through us. The only thing we need to fear is the stuff we get into that can actually destroy our soul.

What a great week to ask for the grace to be responsive to his call! All week, with attentive eyes, we can see with Jesus' own compassion, where he is directing our heart of love and to heal. We begin the week with such a great orientation. Jesus invites us to come to him with our burdens and the stuff that weighs us down and he sends us. He doesn't say we are not supposed to expect burdens. He just invites us to take up his burden, the ministry he gives to each of us.

Each day, following our pattern of focusing throughout the day in brief moments of conversation and connection with the Lord, we can consciously recognize the "calls" the Lord has given us and is offering us. And we can acknowledge them, accept them, embrace them. Of course, our primary relationships are all the ways we live our discipleship call. So often though, these relationships are where we need the greatest courage to be tender, compassionate and courageous in loving, in letting the Spirit speak through us. Let's ask ourselves all week: how can I bring healing and peace to each important relationship in my life? And, where I'm afraid, or resistant, or even where I've given up, that can be the place of the deepest and most important prayer of the week. It certainly can be the place we come to Jesus to be refreshed.

official's daughter from dead and as "his heart was moved with pity" he continues to cure every disease and illness.

Along with these stories of healing in the First Gospel, the call from Jesus begins.

*"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."*

Jesus summons the apostles and sends them out to continue his work, but curing illness and driving out unclean spirits. He tells them how to be a laborer in his field and cautions them of the challenges ahead. On Saturday, he offers a tender example of God's love for us in the story God's love for even the lowly sparrow. "Do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows," he concludes.

A look ahead at the **Fifteen Sunday of Ordinary Time** offers readings filled with the planting, tending and harvesting of what has been sown. The gospel is the compelling image of the sower scattering seed on various types of soil.

All week, we can try to be conscious of how our day to day work is part of our call from the Lord: to be an agent in the world for good, to make products, to offer goods and services to people, to coordinate human activities, to protect and defend others' rights, to heal others. Some of us are still available to be called to a specific work or ministry. This is a great week to ask for openness. Every one of us can find great meaning and deeper peace in placing what we do in the pattern of our response to God's call to us, through Jesus. When we do our work, we can thank the Lord for this work, ask to do it faithfully, lovingly, compassionately and justly. Some of us are struggling to find work that offers us dignity and a living wage. We can ask the Lord to send us to be his servants, with our gifts, and trust in his fidelity.

As we move through the week, growing in our relationship with the Lord all week, as we make this more conscious background moments of insight, recognition and connection, we can give thanks and trust that if we scatter his seed, with trust and with abandon, we don't have to worry. The harvest has his guarantee of abundance.

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