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The Seventeenth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we see how God admires Solomon because he asked for wisdom rather than riches or honors. Jesus is the source of God's wisdom and teach us more about the Kingdom of Heaven. We imagine the passion of one discovering a treasure buried in a field or finding a pearl of great value, sacrificing everything to buy what is so deeply desired. A dragnet hauls in fish that can nourish others as well as what is not useful for others. Jesus invites us into deeper reflection on what we value and prepares us for our mission.

Monday is the **Feast of St. James, Apostle**. Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saints Ann and Joachim, Parents of Mary**. Friday is the **Memorial of St. Martha**.

This is the third and final week from the **Book of Exodus**. Moses meets face to face with God in a tent in the desert and invites God to come with them on their journey. Moses' face is so radiant after meeting with God, it is covered with a veil. Moses builds a movable meeting tent for their journey, and puts the arc of the commandments in it, and in a cloud by day and with fire by night, God was with them. We have only two days of readings from the **Book of Leviticus** which is the third book of the set of five books that begin the scriptures, called the Pentateuch. It is a book of liturgical practices governing the ministry of the priestly descendants of Levi. Here we read about the great Jewish festivals and Jubilee year.

Because both the Sunday and weekday gospels are from **Matthew's Gospel**, the stories are sometime repeated and we get more time to chew them. This is the case this week, as we hear the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the field. Then we again hear how the Kingdom is like a treasure or a pearl a merchant worth making great sacrifices to obtain. Finally, we consider how everyone is gathered by God at the end of time to be judged. As disciples we are instructed to be able to put together both the new and the old.

This leads us right into the **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. When Jesus hears about the death of his cousin John, at the hands of Herod, he headed off

Daily Prayer This Week

This whole week could be a time for each of us to grow in a sense of what we most deeply desire. If we let Sunday's gospel open our hearts we might discover that we really don't invest our time and energy well. We can ask ourselves if we spend time with those we love, if our relationship with the Lord is not something we've invested in, if we haven't thrown ourselves into living our baptism, in our daily lives. It's a matter of knowing what we actually desire, and it's a matter of degree and passion.

And we can let the daily gospels renew our hope. Have we become cynical and jaded a bit? The world does seem to be like a field someone sowed weed into. The growth of God's reign in this world doesn't seem to be growing, and the seeds seem so small. This is a good week to get in touch with what is discouraged in our hearts and to let the courage the Lord is offering us renew us. He promises that even small seeds work and that even a little yeast allows dough to grow. Oh, the process is sometimes imperceptible, but that's why Jesus reminds us to place our trust in him. Our own hearts might be full of weeds, but the Lord doesn't want us ripping ourselves apart. He is full of mercy and healing reconciliation. Jesus does not want us to be scandalized by the evil we see in the world. God is patient. And, God alone will judge.

So every day this week, we can begin our day, establishing a focus. This might be while standing next to our bed for a brief minute, or while pouring ourselves a cup of coffee, or while in the shower or getting dressed. This is the time that can transform any busy day into a more focused time of connection with our Lord. Using all sorts of background times throughout the day will take no "extra" time for prayer, but will make it possible to let these powerful scriptures interact with the daily events and relationships with which we are involved.

One morning we might begin our day, simply by saying, "Lord, thank you for this day. Help me to pay attention to what and who I'm treasuring today." Or, "Lord, be with me this day and help me check my need to judge others. Help me place my trust in you today." While in the shower or driving to work I might talk with the Lord about the day ahead, asking for

for the opposite shore in a boat to be alone. The people came from all over to meet him on the other side. Taking compassion on them, he asked the disciples to feed them with what they had - five loaves and two fish - and he made it possible. **Isaiah 55** invites us to come to the water when we are thirsty, to come and eat though we have no money. We can stop spending on what fails to satisfy. Paul consoles us, too, by reminding us that nothing can "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

particular help, focus, or a new way of valuing during that difficult 10 a.m. meeting or with the clients or students or patients I will see. While doing the wash or shopping or preparing meals or while taking time with my family or friends in the evening, I can let myself have these 30 second friend-to-friend conversations with the Lord. The readings provide a compass for our daily journey, but it is the continual practice at connecting with our Lord that carries us through the day. Looking back and saying "thank you" every night, if even for 30 seconds, will gradually transform us and give us more courage and hope.

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