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The Eighteenth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we celebrates how Jesus fed the crowds by making it possible for the disciples to give the people what they had - which was not enough, but became enough because of the compassion Jesus had for the people. **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."

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, bishop and doctor of the Church**. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint John Vianney, priest**.

The first reading this week continue the Exodus story in the fourth and fifth books of the Bible. As the people complain in the desert, Moses says, "I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me." Miriam and Aaron complain against Moses and God defends him. Scouts return from the land promised the people and they grumble against God again and God loses patience with them. At Meribah, the people are without water and are ready to rebel. God tells Moses to strike a rock to bring forth water for them and their livestock. Moses strikes the rock twice, as if to make it work by his own effort, and God disallows Moses from entering the promised land, for his lack of trust. In Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the people of God's saving deeds - "The Lord is God and there is no other" - and therefore they must obey his covenant with them.

We continue with **Matthew's Gospel**, and Monday's selection anticipates the upcoming Sunday's gospel about the storm at sea. Peter can walk on water, until he takes his eyes off of Jesus. Jesus seems unworried about the disapproval of the Pharisees, calling them "blind guides." A Canaanite woman appeals to Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus hesitates at first, but her faith moves him and he heals the child. Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Jesus singles out Peter for his profession of faith, yet when Jesus tells them of his passion and death, it is Peter who wants to deter Jesus from his mission. Jesus responds by explaining what it is to be a disciple: we'll only find ourselves and the real

Daily Prayer This Week

There is so much grace offered us in the reading this week. At times, all of us know what it is to feel helpless. We all can identify with times when we feel "there just isn't enough" money, love, nourishment, space, whatever it is that we felt we needed at the time. Paying careful attention to Jesus and the loaves and fishes and hearing Isaiah clearly can be a great help for our giving our daily cares to the Lord this week. We could pray each morning, for even 30 seconds something like our version of these words, "Lord, let me come to you today. I feel like I'm rushing toward so much that just isn't satisfying me. Let me give my family, the people I serve, what I have and let you multiply it." That will shape our whole day, as we repeat it and make it more specific. The goal is to be in conversation with our Lord in the midst of our every day life. This "contemplation in action" will not only be very consoling, it will transform us and what we do.

For some of us, it will be easy to identify with the feeling of being on a journey through a desert. And it may be possible to recognize our grumbling sounds. We might really recognize in ourselves Moses' instinct to strike the rock twice. We can ask the Lord, over several mornings, "Lord, let me remember your goodness to me and the many ways you provide for me, even in this desert. I want to trust in your promise to be with me and to offer me water, even from a rock. Let me surrender to your way today, Lord."

Some of us might really identify with Peter this week. He's an eager and zealous follower of Jesus, but he sure doesn't like the part of discipleship that is the journey to Jerusalem. We can listen to Jesus tell us again how dying to ourselves is the source of the life we seek. We can ask for the desire to embrace the crosses give to us each day and perhaps name concrete things, habits, ways of acting that we can ask for the grace to let go of.

Some of us might really be experiences ourselves in a little boat in the midst of a big storm at sea. Fear can really take over. This can be a wonderful week to try to imagine Jesus coming toward us, with arms outstretched in the midst of whatever

meaning of life by losing ourselves.

Saturday is the **Feast of the Transfiguration**. Jesus is revealed to Peter, James and John for who he really is in order to prepare them for the scandal of the cross. God witnesses to him: This is my Son; listen to him.

On the **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Elijah recognizes God's presence in a "tiny whispering sound." In the storm at sea, Peter actually gets out of his boat to come to Jesus but "when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink,"

storm we are involved in. We can hear Jesus inviting us out of our little boat - to let go of the securities we cling to and to realize we can walk toward Jesus anywhere, in the midst of anything. We can learn from how Peter took his eyes off Jesus, and just couldn't let go of his fear of the wind and the waves. Is that why we feel like we are sinking sometimes?

Each night, we can thank the Lord that this week has drawn us closer to him, in these little conversations that hold our days together, and allow us to listen to him, day by day.

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