

[Online Ministries Home Page](#) | [Daily Reflections](#) | [Online Retreat](#) | [Stations of the Cross](#) | [Practical Spirituality](#) | [Spirituality Links](#)

Return to the [Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer](#) | [Tell a Friend about these Weekly Guides](#)

Visit the [Daily Reflections Each Day This Week](#)

[PDF of this page](#)

The Twenty-Fifth Week of Ordinary Time

For the **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we receive the powerful parable about the landlord who represents God's way of caring for us. Though workers go out into his vineyard at various times of the day, he pays them all the same. When they grumble, he simply explains that he desires to be generous, challenging us to reflect upon our view of God and our own sense of justice.

Tuesday is the **Memorial of St. Andrew Kim and his companions, Martyrs of Korea**. Wednesday is the **Feast of St. Matthew, apostle and evangelist**. We have the story from **Matthew** where the Pharisees ask why Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners. He answers, "Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners." Friday is the **Memorial of Padre Pio, Saint Pio of Pietrelcina**.

The first reading this week comes from the **Book of Ezra**, one of the first chroniclers of the post-exile period of Judaism. He is responsible for helping hold the restored people together. We finish the week with brief selections from the prophets **Haggai** and **Zechariah**, who were prophets during this period. "Consider your ways!" "My spirit continues in your midst; do not fear!"

In **Luke's Gospel**, Jesus tells us to take care how we hear his Word. When his family comes looking for him, Jesus uses the occasion to tell us that we are family to him, if we hear his Word and act on it. Herod is wondering who Jesus really is. Jesus asks his disciples who they think he is. He doesn't want them to announce he's the type of Messiah they were looking for. Instead, he tells them of his upcoming passion and death.

On the **Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear Paul exhorting the **Philippians**, "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus," offering us a powerful image of Jesus' humble, self-less service. In **Matthew's Gospel** Jesus challenges the chief priests and elders of the people, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a great week to reflect upon God's surprising way of loving us. The parable about the generous landlord who goes beyond equality and justice by paying a full day's wage to even the worker who only worked an hour reveals to us God's special and preferential care for the poor. The Feast of St. Matthew gives us a reminder that Jesus was criticized for his comfort in being with people who were not faithful, reminding us that God desires that we work harder at being merciful. And in the upcoming Sunday's gospel we hear Jesus asking the provocative question about two responses: saying "yes" but actually not following the Lord or saying "no" but actually following the Lord. How shocking it must have been to the religious people listening to Jesus when he said, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you." We might reflect this week on the areas in which we are being called to a deeper conversion in what we do and what we still faith to do.

How do we do such serious reflection when it seems we don't have time for it? We can be "contemplatives in action" by beginning our day with a desire, letting that desire come to our consciousness throughout the day in the "background" moments, and by giving thanks for what graces we received at the end of the day.

How do we come up with the desire? The first step to finding "intimacy with God in the midst of our daily lives" is to develop the habit of naming a desire for the day, while we are still just getting started with the day, before our concentration becomes pre-occupied with the worries of the day. These guides can help by suggesting desires that flow from the readings of the week, but the best desires are in the very needs and anxieties that are deep in our hearts. That is where God is working in us, revealing things we can turn over to the Lord and form into a prayer. It can often be just 45 seconds, when we throw on a robe or slippers, or while in the shower or getting dressed. It is deep prayer if we can just say, "Help me, today, Lord. My day is so full. Give me courage, and let me know you are with me all day."

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