

[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-Ninth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we see the remarkable overlap of the gospels. **Matthew** tells us the Pharisee plot to set a trap for Jesus, this time using politics to see if he will offend either Rome or the people. Should they pay Rome's census tax? Jesus pushes the challenge back to them: "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." What is it they must repay to God that is God's? Their trust in Jesus, God's gift to them.

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr**. Tuesday we have the joy of celebrating the **Feast of Saint Luke, evangelist**. Wednesday is a great Jesuit celebration of the "North American Martyrs" the **Memorial of the Saint John de Brébeuf, Saint Isaac Jogues, and their companions, martyrs**.

St. Paul writes, in his **Letter to the Romans** about freedom this week. He contrasts slavery to sin to a new freedom: slavery to righteousness, that is, surrendering ourselves to God's love and mercy. Paul praises God for Jesus because he saves us from the war that seems to be within us, always attracting us to evil. Finally, this week, Paul urges us to live in the Spirit that has been given us, a Spirit that will give life to our mortal bodies.

Celebrating St. Luke this week, we enjoy **Luke's gospel** even more. Jesus tells us to beware of greed and that our "life does not consist of possessions." Jesus' mission is to bring peace and healing. We are to be prepared for the times our Lord comes to us. Much is expected of us who have been entrusted with so much. Jesus has come to set a fire among us, which will probably also place us at odds with others, even others we love. Yet, Jesus calls us to read the signs of our times and to make peace with our opponents if we can. We are being fertilized to bear fruit.

For the **Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time** the Word is clear. **Ezekiel** proclaims God's call that we act justly toward foreigners, widows, orphans and the poor. Jesus says it most simply: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a terrific week to ask for the gift of freedom. Each day, when we focus ourselves in the morning, and throughout each busy morning, afternoon and evening, we can keep asking God to help us, to give us what we need to become freer. There's freedom "from" and freedom "for." We can ask to be released from what has a hold on us. If we ask, we can trust that God will give us the grace to understand our unfreedoms, to be more honest with ourselves about them, and to grow in a desire to discover what we would be like without them. We can also ask to grow in our availability to be sent to live our baptism. If we express our desire to be placed at the service of others, to be able to give our lives away more generously, we can trust that God will let Jesus set our hearts on fire. The first step in this growing habit of finding intimacy with God in the midst of our everyday lives, becoming *Contempatives in Action*, is naming the desires that God has placed in our hearts.

The Word helps us each week. Sometimes, one phrase or one story will carry us for several days. Other weeks, we will have to look back at the readings to hear a reminder, an encouragement, a call. I might stay with the words, "give to God what is God's." On a given day it might be a great grace to realize all is gift, including the members of my family, the gifts I've been given to do my work, the graces offered me this very day. If I hear the words of Jesus, "life does not consist in possessions," we might ask him to show me how this is meant for me this week. Perhaps I will imagine myself as that tree that isn't bearing much fruit. Instead of cutting me down, our Lord is patient and willing to nourish me and cultivate me, so that I can bear fruit.

All week, we speak with our Lord, friend to friend, expressing whatever is in our hearts. No matter how busy we are, we will grow in gratitude as we see how much Jesus can do with our open hearts.

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