

"Into whatever house you enter,
first say,
'Peace to this household.'"
Luke 10

Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time: July 1-7, 2007

The Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Sunday is the **Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. In **Luke's Gospel** we hear of Jesus "resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem" but not being welcomed by all. When Jesus invites: "Follow me" he is put off with excuses. "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

Tuesday is the **Feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle**. The readings for this feast are unique from the regular daily readings in honor of this special day.

The stories from **Genesis** continue in the first readings this week. We hear the stories of Abraham's struggles with faith and fidelity, culminating with Jacob stealing his brother Esau's birthright.

Jesus begins an itinerant preacher phase of his ministry this week. In the gospels, we follow Jesus departing the Sermon on the Mount and proceeding to the territory of the Gaderenes and "his own town." We see profound examples of compassion and healing, as Jesus drives demons into the swine, cures the paralytic, or calls Matthew the tax collector to follow Him. We witness Jesus being driven out of an area by those who do not want to believe, so crowded by believers that his "patient" is lowered through the roof, and questioned by the disciples of John the Baptist. All these as primary examples for us of what we could face if we follow Him.

Sunday is the **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. We continue in **Luke's Gospel** with Jesus sending out the seventy-two "like lambs among wolves." Typical of Jesus' teachings, the sending reveals both the grace of being sent and a lesson of what to be thankful for. We are called not to be proud in our status as Christians, but joyous in our knowledge that we have a place in God's Kingdom.

Daily Prayer This Week

It can sometimes take great amounts of courage to follow Jesus. So easily can our being "Christian" be taken for granted that the foundational meaning of what it means to follow Him gets lost in the hype, or even popularity, of being a Christian. We can so easily, and often justifiably, get so caught up in our daily routine that taking time to consider the question of "*Why do I follow Christ?*" gets postponed until I have more time.

This week, we can find those times in our day where we have down time, no matter how little, and consider this question. We can first be grateful for this time offered, and rejoice in this call of Christ to follow where He has gone. "*Lord, thank you for knowing me, and calling me down your path.*" As we become more comfortable finding these niches in our day, anywhere from in the shower, the commute to work, or the mid-morning coffee break, we can reflect on this call to follow and be grateful that not only have we been called, but we have been given the gifts necessary to fulfill that call. "*...just as you have given me the grace to desire and offer this, so may you also give me the grace to fulfill it.*" (From the Vows of the Society of Jesus)

A great temptation is to consider that we are not worthy to follow in this call of Jesus. We may be aware of things we have done or people we have wronged that might "disqualify" us from following Jesus as we think he intends. The week is a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon His words as we realize that "*I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.*" We can rejoice in the heartfelt knowledge that no matter how unworthy we may feel, we are beloved children of God and have been called to a place in His Kingdom.

At the end of each day, we can spend a few moments in thanks. Grateful that we have been called, and grateful that we have been given the gifts necessary to heed that call. We can rejoice in the knowledge that we are amidst brothers and sisters that share that call, and that we all have a place in the Kingdom of God.

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