

Love your enemies and do good to them,
and lend expecting nothing back;
then your reward will be great.

- Luke 6

Creighton University's Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time: September 9 - 15, 2012

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Twenty-Third Week in Ordinary Time

On the **Twenty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time**, Isaiah offers comforting words: "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you." In **Mark's Gospel**, Jesus heals a deaf and mute man. The people are astonished and say of Jesus, "He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint John Chrysostom, bishop and doctor of the Church**. Friday is the **Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross** which is always followed by Saturday's **Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows**.

In our first reading, we continue with Paul's **First Letter to the Corinthians**, an intimate look at the struggles of an early Church community.

In **Luke's Gospel** this week we see Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath, in a synagogue, right in front of his religious critics who plot to deal with him. Jesus then spends a night in prayer and calls his twelve closest followers. When people come to him from all over, he heals them. Jesus announces that the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those hated or excluded or denounced because of him are the blessed. He warns those who are rich, filled, laughing and spoken well of, for their fates will be reversed. Jesus urges us to love our enemies. "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned." He cautions not to be quick to

Daily Prayer This Week

This week's daily communion with our Lord can be about the mysteries of self-sacrifice and healing. In the back of our minds each day, we can have a desire to take time out of our busy days just as Jesus did, for prayer and speaking to his Father. We can be aware of the judgmental religious leaders of Jesus' time, who ignored the beam of wood in their own eyes to point out the splinter in someone else's eye. We can also ask for the vision to see how we might be blind to our own snap judgments of others.

If we begin each morning by praying a desire, the rest will follow for the day. *"Good morning, Lord. Thank you for this day. Help me today to bring to you the parts of myself that need your healing. Be with me as I face the poverty, hunger or tears of this day."* We can go into this prayer, in more depth or detail while we are in the shower or getting dressed. If we let these desires make their way into the background of our day, we can focus our consciousness no matter what we are doing.

Even in activities that require "our full consciousness" and attention, it is possible to shape that consciousness in the context of our desires. For example, I might be in an important meeting, that doesn't allow me to day dream. But, I can walk into that meeting room saying in my heart, *"Okay, Lord, be with me here. While I'm so tempted to be seen as a 'success' here, heal all of that focus on myself and free me to do my best and to be attentive to the needs of others. Let me focus on you and your desires for the greater good here."*

see the splinter in someone else's eye when we do not notice the “wooden beam” in our own eyes. He says that we will be known by our fruit. It is only by building our lives upon him, as a firm foundation, can we hope to survive crises.

On the **Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear in **Mark's Gospel** as Jesus tell his disciples about his passion, death and resurrection to come in Jerusalem. Peter tries to prevent him from going there. Jesus rebukes him and tells the disciples and us that to be a disciple is to follow him, not trying to save one's life, but by dying to ourselves and losing ourselves for his sake and that of the Gospel. That is the only path to real life.

Especially when we are facing something that is quite difficult, requiring real self-sacrifice and genuine love, we can let our background conversation with the Lord release us from our “typical” response or behavior. *“Lord, I'm so full of fear sometimes. I see you boldly heal the man with the withered hand in front of the steely gaze of your critics. You healed because you knew it was the right and compassionate thing to do. Help me to be more courageous in choosing the right thing in my life today.*

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