

“When Jesus disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.”
- Mark 6

Fourth Week of Ordinary Time: February 3 - 9, 2013

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Fourth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**, **Luke's gospel** continues the story of the Jesus teaching in the synagogue. The crowd, although “amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth” began to challenge Jesus. He responds that “no prophet is accepted in his own native place” and challenges their assumptions, angering the crowd. When they try to drive him out of town, he passes through their midst.

Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr**. Wednesday is the Memorial of the Japanese Jesuit **Saint Paul Miki and his Companions, Martyrs**.

The first reading this week continues with the **Letter to the Hebrews**. Jesus is priest and we should not be discouraged.

In **Mark's Gospel** this week, Jesus continues to heal and teach. A man in the Gerasenes is healed of unclean spirits and wants to stay with Jesus but he tells the man, “Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you.” The young daughter of a synagogue official is sick and on the way to cure her, as Jesus stood in a crowd, he felt the power go out of him as a woman with a hemorrhage touched his cloak. “Your faith has saved you,” he reassures her. To the synagogue official he says, “Do not be afraid; just have faith” and heals his daughter. He teaches in the synagogue in his hometown “and they took offense at him.”

He was not able to perform miracles there, because of their lack of faith. Jesus sends his apostles, in twos, to share the good news. After publicly promising a dancer anything she wants,

Daily Prayer This Week

The readings this week seem to be about healing and call. In our ongoing renewal, we can ask our Lord to be continually healed of what is getting in my way and to continually be more and more open to my call.

Even though we are trying to be people who find intimacy with God in the very midst of our everyday lives, there might be moments this week when we plug into a really great connection with our Lord. So often that happens when we find ourselves in need of healing. Perhaps after many years of one part of our life being dominated by an unclean spirit, we discover a readiness to be whole again, pure again. Maybe we encounter a sin that has become “my” sin, my obstacle to growth in my relationship with God. This may be the week to open my heart to pure grace and reconciliation.

This could be the week when we discover what a handicap fear itself is in my life. It may be the reason we don't ask or even reach out to touch Jesus for healing. This may be the week we are being invited to no longer be afraid and to let our Lord love us and heal us. Touching his cloak, without words, may be enough for us.

This week, like so many, can be a time for us to be consciously aware of our being called - placed in a position of being his disciple. In that situation, whatever way the invitation comes to us, we are clearly

Herod reluctantly gives the girl her wish and orders John the Baptist to be beheaded. When Jesus' disciples return from their journeys, he encourages them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." But as they tried to get away "and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

On the **Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time**, we reflect on **Luke's Gospel's** marvelous call of Peter. Jesus preaches from Peter's boat, invites Peter out into "deeper water" and shows him his power to catch fish. When Peter recoils in fear, Jesus calls him to gather people with Jesus' same power. "Do not be afraid," Jesus tells him, and says that from now on he will be catching people instead of fish.

facing an opportunity to be a source of good news, rather than bad news; to love tenderly, rather than selfishly; to be a gatherer of others, rather than a divider; and to be a source of compassion, rather than a heartless judge. And, when that happens, we can delight in spending a bit more time with Jesus, comforting us for being his disciple there. We can "come away with him" for even a brief moment and give thanks that we had that taste of his ministry, happening through us.

When we rest each night this week, expressing our thanks for this daily prayer is quite in order.

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