



Bringing Home the Word

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

July 7, 2024

Who Do You Think You Are?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This question is not always posed in a spirit of lightheartedness. It could be hurled at someone in indignation. This indignation might be justified; the other could be assuming an unwarranted attitude of superiority. However, the fault could be our own. We might resent another's genuine insight or unquestionable wisdom. There seems to be within some of us a sense of inferiority that is threatened by the abilities of others—as if their talents diminish those who feel inferior. And what do we do about this? We might ignore such an individual, implying that she or he has nothing that interests us.

This probably happens more often than we like to admit. Or we might try to embarrass the person, thus lowering the individual in the estimation of others. This is how some people depicted in the Gospel passage acted toward Jesus.

Prophets are not people who only look into the future. Such people are called seers. Genuine prophets have insight into the present, understanding the implications of the social forces that are operative and the challenge they might pose to religious traditions. That's why they are so often resented. We see this attitude in the passage from Ezekiel. God sent him to a rebellious people to call them to repentance. Chances are, this did not make him popular. It also did not make Jesus popular with some. So often we applaud people who have religious insight—unless we know them well. Then we may think, *You're no better than the rest of us. Who do you think you are?* †

Genuine prophets have insight into the present, understanding the implications of social forces and the challenge they might pose.

A Word from Pope Francis

We would...like to believe in a 'special effects' god who does only exceptional things and always provokes strong emotions. Instead, brothers and sisters, God incarnated Himself: God is humble, God is tender, God is hidden, he draws near to us, living the normality of our daily life.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 4, 2021



Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 2:2-5

Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ.

Mark 6:1-6a

Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?... He was amazed at their lack of faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you appreciate the insights of others, even when they challenge your own?
- Who do you think has insight into today's chaotic world? Why?

Marriage Prep: Start Young!

Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

From the time I was about eight years old, my Aunt Hilda would say, “When you become a priest, please pray for me.” As a boy, the priesthood sounded like a good idea. I didn’t know clearly at the time that I was called to be a priest, but maybe she saw something in me that I had yet to discover. During those growing-up years, my parents and other relatives gave me encouragement. The priests and religious in our family hoped a new generation would sign on. And we did. But no one ever said to us, “I hope you’ll be a good husband or wife” or “I hope you’ll be a good mom or dad.” Shouldn’t they have?

From our earliest years, our parents teach us about marriage. As we age, we

find ourselves repeating words, actions, and behavioral patterns ingrained in us from our youth. Marriage preparation



begins at birth, long before one’s spouse is known, not when the couple signs up for Pre-Cana, reserves the church, and finds a catering hall. What did you learn from your parents about marriage?

I think we in the Church should treat the call to married life in the same way we treat the call to the priesthood and religious life. Start young! Promote marriage and what makes a happy, healthy, and holy marriage. At confirmations, bishops often ask who wants to be a priest or a religious. They follow with some instructions on how to nurture the vocation. Marriage should get equal time. The bishops should ask who wants to be happily married some day and tell young people how to prepare well to live that vocation. The future of the Church and the world hinges on the health and holiness of those who live the married and family vocation. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “Five Guidelines for Discerning Your Vocation” by Fr. Dan Lackie, OFM

Whatever the context of our vocational discernment—whether we’re discerning marriage, single or religious life, or ordained ministry—we can be assured that, as disciples of Jesus Christ, where two or more are gathered, there he is in our midst, ready to confound, delight, and orient us in the direction of our deepest joy. In the end, blessed hungers or holy longings will lead us to where God wants us to be. Daily prayer, facing our fears, and being honest about our own habits of thinking and acting are fundamental in approaching life decisions. When they’re rooted in a personal assurance of God’s loving embrace, they can lead to life choices that reflect God’s will in our lives. †

Catholic Update—explores Church teaching and tradition on contemporary topics. Liguori.org • 800-325-9521.



Faithful God, teach us to listen carefully to those dearest to us, our young ones and our elders, and all those you have given us to love. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 8–13

Monday, Weekday:
Hos 2:16, 17c–18, 21–22 / Mt 9:18–26

Tuesday, Weekday:
Hos 8:4–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:32–38

Wednesday, Weekday:
Hos 10:1–3, 7–8, 12 / Mt 10:1–7

Thursday, St. Benedict:
Hos 11:1–4, 8e–9 / Mt 10:7–15

Friday, Weekday:
Hos 14:2–10 / Mt 10:16–23

Saturday, Weekday:
Is 6:1–8 / Mt 10:24–33

Bringing Home
the Word 

July 7, 2024

© 2024 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2024 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.



Bringing Home the Word

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

July 14, 2024

You Can Do It

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Today’s readings are about unpretentious people who accomplished remarkable deeds. Amos, a shepherd from the southern kingdom of Judah who also cultivated sycamore figs, challenged the people at a northern shrine in Israel. He did not come from an illustrious family, nor was he particularly important. Yet he is the one called by God to summon the northern Israelites to repentance.

The disciples of Jesus pursued family businesses like fishing or were employed by the Romans like Matthew. They didn’t come from socially prominent families,

nor were they known as community leaders. But look at what they did: they cast out demons and cured the sick. Where did these people get their training? More importantly, where did they obtain their power? We find the answer to such questions in the second reading: “In him we were also chosen” (Ephesians 1:11).

We are assured that God “has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens” (Ephesians 1:3). We don’t have to worry about performing miracles; all we have to do is open ourselves to the graciousness of God. God will do the rest. Through us, God will cast out the demons of prejudice and bias that plague our world, of selfishness and spitefulness so prominent in our political rivalries, of greed and dishonesty in many of our social interactions. Through us, God will heal our country, our world, and our Church of hatred, violence, and oppression. With Amos and the Twelve we too hear: “You can do it.” †

We don’t have to worry about performing miracles; all we have to do is open ourselves to the graciousness of God. God will do the rest.

A Word from Pope Francis

The Twelve have the order to “take nothing for their journey except a staff”.... The staff and the sandals are the gear of pilgrims because that is what the messengers of the Kingdom of God are, not omnipotent managers, not irreplaceable officials, not celebrities on tour... [They are] humble workers of the Kingdom.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 15, 2018



Sunday Readings

Amos 7:12–15

The LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, “Go, prophesy to my people Israel.”

Ephesians 1:3–14 or 1:3–10

In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace.

Mark 6:7–13

[Jesus] summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you realize that through God, ordinary people have the power to transform the world?
- In what ways do you make the world better?

Claiming Hope for the Wounded

Kathleen M. Basi

The Japanese technique known as *kintsugi* involves piecing together shattered pottery and binding it with gold lacquer. Rather than trying to hide the flaws in a piece, this art form recognizes that flaws themselves are part of an object's beauty. Our wounds—and especially the ways we react to them—are precious scars that make us unique and beautiful children of God.

Well-meaning platitudes can undercut this central truth of human existence. When people say, “God’s ways are not our ways” or “God has a plan” or “God never gives us more than we can handle,” it’s easy to start thinking God gave us this pain on purpose to torment us. But the wounds we suffer are not the will of God. They are the reality of living in a fallen



world in which the effects of sin ripple outward.

One thing is true, though: God can use our pain—our broken places—to do something beautiful within us. As he stitches us back together with the gold of his love and healing, we become more

sensitive to the richness life has to offer. We learn a profound gratitude for all that is good, beautiful, and holy, and empathy and compassion for others.

God does not abandon us to despair. If we give him the space to work within us, he can transform our pain. We may not recognize it until years later—if ever. But trusting that his hand is at work, even in suffering he did not wish upon us, can free us to hope for the future.

Lord, you have promised that, in the end, all things work for good. Help me entrust you with my suffering. Use my pain to bring a little piece of your kingdom to earth. Give me the grace to seek joy despite my woundedness. Anima Christi! O good Jesus, hear me; within your wounds hide me. Amen. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “An Invitation to Prayer” by Fr. Edward Hays

Our search for God in our prayer lives is not restricted to special times and places. The Holy Spirit invites us, in the words of St. Paul, to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). How does one respond to the invitation to pray always? We need to discover ways to remind ourselves of God’s loving presence in our everyday world. God is present to us twenty-four hours a day. It is our awareness of God that needs heightening. Rituals can help us in this regard: not only familiar rituals like morning, evening, and meal prayers, but other simple rituals that we create for ourselves. †

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church teaching and tradition on contemporary topics. Liguori.org • 800-325-9521



Loving God, as Jesus called the disciples and sent them to do your work and your will, help us to listen for your call to the life you intend for us. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 15–20

Monday, St. Bonaventure:
Is 1:10–17 / Mt 10:34–11:1

Tuesday, Weekday:
Is 7:1–9 / Mt 11:20–24

Wednesday, Weekday:
Is 10:5–7, 13b–16 / Mt 11:25–27

Thursday, Weekday:
Is 26:7–9, 12, 16–19 / Mt 11:28–30

Friday, Weekday:
Is 38:1–6, 21–22, 7–8 / Mt 12:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Mi 2:1–5 / Mt 12:14–21

Bringing Home
the Word 

July 14, 2024

© 2024 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2024 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.



Bringing Home the Word

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
July 21, 2024

Follow the Leader

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This is not simply the name of a childhood game. It is actually an essential directive for living. We learn so many things in life because we followed someone. That is how we learned to read, to play a musical instrument, to speak another language, to understand social behavior.

Many nations at the time of Jeremiah represented their kings as shepherds, leading the people to verdant pastures and restful waters. We see this in the art they left behind. However, many of the kings of Jeremiah's day were not good leaders—not attentive shepherds, nor

faithful to God, who had entrusted the people to their care. Consequently, God stepped in to be their shepherd. This is the image of the divine shepherd found in Psalm 23. Jesus also characterized religious leaders as shepherds. He was distraught that the people were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34).

Is this situation different today? Many are eager to follow a leader, but which one? Ours is a multicultural, pluralistic, international society with innumerable viewpoints. Voices cry out from many corners, demanding to be heard. But which voice should we heed? Which worldly leaders should we follow? It's apparent that our leaders, both civic and religious, disagree on certain matters. What are we to do? The issue is not “with whom do I agree?” but rather “whose point of view makes me a better person? More compassionate? More understanding? More selfless? More Christlike?” Are we following the right leader? †

Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 23:1–6

I will raise up shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear or be terrified; none shall be missing.

Ephesians 2:13–18

Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.

Mark 6:30–34

His heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Voices cry out from many corners, demanding to be heard. But which voice should we heed?

A Word from Pope Francis

Compassion is born from contemplation. If we learn to truly rest, we become capable of true compassion.... We need—listen to this—we need an “ecology of the heart,” that is made up of rest, contemplation and compassion. Let us take advantage of the summertime for this! It will help us quite a bit.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 18, 2021



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS



- The Good Shepherd seeks to unite, not divide. Who are the Good Shepherds today?
- Jesus the Good Shepherd cares for all. Do we?

Infinite Layers of Mystery

Kathleen M. Basi

We live in a world where science reveals wonders as distant as the far reaches of the universe and as intimate as our own DNA. We prize knowledge and revere those who help us reach greater understanding of the world and ourselves. It is a good thing to seek wisdom, but focusing too much on intellect makes it easy to get jaded about the things that defy scientific testing. We think we should be able to pull apart the strands of the universe and reduce everything to its components. When we can't, we start worrying that we're being taken for a ride.

Yet mystery surrounds us. In every age, humans have looked to the night sky with wonder and awe, marveling at the size of the universe and our own tiny



place within it. And who contemplates the death of a child without asking, "Why?" Mystery can inspire awe; it can deepen grief; it can challenge our faith. As we long to understand the earth, so we long to understand the one who

made us. Yet some things will always remain unfathomable. The tension between these two opposing realities will not be resolved on this side of eternity. The deeper we dig, the more we will understand about God. Yet the more we understand, the more layers of mystery are revealed.

As frustrating as it may seem, that's a good thing. Contemplating all that cannot be understood offers a much-needed balanced perspective, namely: there is a bright center of the universe, and I am not it. As hard as it may be to do this, living the faith means accepting, even embracing the reality that not all things can be known and understood. At least not now. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke said it beautifully in his *Letters to a Young Poet* when he wrote about being patient toward the unknown, embracing the questions within, and living in the moment to uncover the answers. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "End-of-Life Moral Issues" by Thomas A. Shannon, PhD

When we face difficult decisions at the end of life, we should consider what the intervention does to the patient and for the patient. Modern medicine, as good as it is, cannot cure everything. We must also remember that we are finite beings; we do not live forever. Moving from attempting to cure to providing comfort care is a difficult decision, but it may be one of the most significant gifts we can give to a loved one because it will make the final days more peaceful by helping to relieve his or her suffering and providing the comfort of companionship. †

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church teaching and tradition on contemporary topics. Liguori.org • 800-325-9521



Caring God, bless us with good rest and eyes open to the beauty that surrounds us so that we may be patient and compassionate people. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 22–27

Monday, St. Mary Magdalene: Sg 3:1–4b
or 2 Cor 5:14–17 / Jn 20:1–2, 11–18


Tuesday, Weekday:
Mi 7:14–15, 18–20 / Mt 12:46–50

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jer 1:1, 4–10 / Mt 13:1–9

Thursday, St. James:
2 Cor 4:7–15 / Mt 20:20–28

Friday, Sts. Joachim and Anne:
Jer 3:14–17 / Mt 13:18–23

Saturday, Weekday:
Jer 7:1–11 / Mt 13:24–30

Bringing Home
the Word 

July 21, 2024

© 2024 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2024 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.



Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

July 28, 2024

More than Enough

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Two stories today tell of people hungry for bread who amazingly receive more than enough. In both the first reading and the Gospel passage, a few loaves feed a multitude of people, and there are baskets of leftovers. How did this happen? Did the loaves multiply before their eyes? Did more food drop from heaven? Who of us would not have been thrilled to witness a miraculous feeding like that?

These stories are rich in religious meaning. First, they are meant to show that God meets the needs of vulnerable people—and meets those needs in ways

only God can. Second, the surplus bread reveals the overabundance of divine graciousness. God gives us much more than we need. In other words, God’s generosity is boundless. Third, these marvels don’t just happen out of the blue. They occur through the agency of very ordinary people. In the first reading, it is Elisha’s unnamed servant who distributes the loaves. The miracle seems to happen in his very hands. In the Gospel passage, it is the disciples of Jesus—ordinary, questioning people like you and me who gather up twelve baskets of leftovers.

Did this event really happen? Of course it did. In fact, these kinds of occurrences continue today. God is continually meeting our needs. God’s generosity is always boundless. And God still accomplishes marvelous things in our lives through very ordinary people. The problem is that we often fail to realize this. We sometimes wish to see loaves of bread miraculously appear. †

God gives us much more than we need; God’s generosity is boundless.



A Word from Pope Francis

The disciples ask [the boy] to share everything he has to eat.... Thanks to that small freely-given and therefore heroic gift, Jesus is able to feed everyone.... The Lord can do a lot with the little that we put at His disposal.... This is how God loves to act....

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 25, 2021



Sunday Readings

2 Kings 4:42–44

[Elisha said,] “Thus says the LORD: You will eat and have some left over.”

Ephesians 4:1–6

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love.

John 6:1–15

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Through whom has God cared for you and met your needs?
- How does God work through you to meet the needs of others?



Embrace the Silence to Hear God's Voice

Emily Blasik

As a writer, I turn my thoughts into articles, my adventures into blog posts, my reflections into columns. I've been this way for as long as I can remember, writing and sharing for the sake of relating to others. But with social media it's almost impossible to

break away from the noise. So many are obsessed with sharing everything—from daily meals to vacation attire to work woes. Post, like, comment, repeat. Again and again and again. This social phenomenon, while it has its upsides, is making it harder and harder to actually be alone with our thoughts.

I am a millennial who is guilty of oversharing and over-searching. Sometimes, it actually pains me to leave anything I experience in my daily life undocumented, as if not sharing means it never happened. And when I'm not posting, I'm scrolling through the endless updates of my friends, celebrities, and

perfect strangers for what seems like no good reason at all. It's something to do; something to fill the silence.

Which makes me wonder: What kind of void are we trying so desperately to fill? As much as we'd like to convince ourselves that we're master multitaskers, no one can hear God calling over the incessant pings, alerts, and notifications vying for our attention. Frankly, most of us need a wake-up call. We are slowly losing touch with ourselves and our Creator because we refuse to shut out the distractions. At least, I know I am. I can't even remember the last time I completely unplugged for more than an hour to focus on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Can you? Have you tried being silent recently—sans phone, computer, music, or podcast? It's harder now than ever before. And yet I believe it's absolutely crucial for the sake of our spiritual health and, ultimately, our salvation. †

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "Making a Pilgrimage: The Journey Begins Within" by Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR

Why go on pilgrimage? Fundamentally, go for conversion and edification. Visit a shrine or holy place to be transformed. Journey there to increase your desire for a change of heart, behavior, attitude, or perspective. Like the Magi, you may return home with a fresh outlook on life, a deeper understanding of your faith, and a closer relationship with the Lord. In a broader sense, all Christians travel on a lifelong pilgrimage toward the sacred place we call heaven. "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come" (Hebrews 13:14). On pilgrimage, one may experience most profoundly God's presence in this world, encouraging us on our journey to the next. †

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church teaching and tradition on contemporary topics. Liguori.org • 800-325-9521



God of abundance, when we are anxious, remind us that you are the source of all that we need and that all will be well.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 29—August 3

Monday, Sts. Mary, Martha and Lazarus:
Jer 13:1–11(401) / Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42

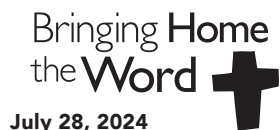
Tuesday, Weekday:
Jer 14:17–22 / Mt 13:36–43

Wednesday, St. Ignatius of Loyola:
Jer 15:10, 16–21 / Mt 13:44–46

Thursday, St. Alphonsus Liguori:
Jer 18:1–6 / Mt 13:47–53

Friday, Weekday:
Jer 26:1–9 / Mt 13:54–58

Saturday, Weekday:
Jer 26:11–16, 24 / Mt 14:1–12



July 28, 2024

© 2024 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2024 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.