



Bringing Home the Word

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 6, 2025

Rebuild a City

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

There doesn't seem to be a period in human history when cities were not destroyed by war.

This was the case in ancient Rome, Atlanta during the Civil War, Dresden in World War II, Aleppo in Syria, and cities throughout Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza. The devastation of a city leaves the survivors of the tragedy in desperate straits. This is the situation to which Isaiah speaks in the first reading. His message is one of hope. Jerusalem will be rebuilt; it will flourish once again. God will "spread prosperity over her like a river" (Isaiah 66:12). This will not

be accomplished through mere human effort but through the power of God.

The passage from Luke tells us how God will accomplish such a feat. There, we read that Jesus sent seventy-two followers to preach the gospel. The power of God will work through them. We know little about who they were, from which villages they came, or how long they acted as itinerant preachers. They may simply have gone back to their own lives and ministered to their own people. Such information is inconsequential.

What is important is the fact that God works through the followers of Jesus, through you and me. It will be through us that lives are rebuilt, that people thrive again. It will be through us that cities are no longer destroyed by war. Do we believe this? Are we willing to be sent "to every town and place he intended to visit" (Luke 10:1)? †



***It will be through us
that lives are rebuilt,
that people thrive again.***

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 66:10–14c

For thus says the LORD: I will spread prosperity over [Jerusalem] like a river, like an overflowing torrent.

Galatians 6:14–18

From now on, let no one make troubles for me; for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.

Luke 10:1–12, 17–20 or Luke 10:1–9

[Jesus] said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few."

A Word from Pope Francis (1936–2025)

Brother, sister, peace begins with us; it starts from me and from you, from each one of us, from the heart of every one of us. If you live his peace, Jesus comes, and your family [and] your society change. They change if first of all your heart is not at war.... Placing peace and order in your own heart...this is where peace begins.

HOMILY, ROME, JULY 3, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I consider myself a disciple who is sent to others?
- How do I live this out in my daily life?



Making Hard Choices

Pierre Wolff

What can I do when I have a nagging feeling that there is a choice to be made, but I have difficulty “hearing the exact words” of the question? I may know, for example, that it

revolves around the issue of the poor, or an attraction to working in Latin America, or the fact that “I can’t say no” to people, or a vague uneasiness about my job, but it is not clear.

If, after reflection, I still find myself saying, “I don’t know exactly what’s the matter,” I may have to take some systematic steps in order to coax the exact nature of the choice to emerge from the shadows. First, I must respect my need for time. I take my time. This requires being patient with my lack of clarity. I’ll resist internal and external pressure to “come up with” something that resembles a decision. Also, I give my time to it. I schedule moments for reflecting, pondering, musing, and

mulling it over. I pray, asking for the grace of clarification.

Second, it might be very helpful to find someone who can listen to me as I try to come to grips with the nature of my problem—a person with no need to advise, who is a good listener. I may seek someone who facilitates clarification by giving me honest feedback about my clarity or lack of it, who knows how to ask clarifying questions.

A third step is to touch the general area, to establish contact. Suppose I [have] the presence of the poor in my consciousness. I might volunteer my services on a regular basis and for a while with an agency [that helps the poor] and see what clarification develops. I might

do the same by volunteering [with] prisoners, handicapped people, the elderly, and so on. ‡

**Schedule moments
for reflecting,
pondering, musing,
and mulling it over.**

Excerpted from *Discernment: The Art of Choosing Well* by Pierre Wolff, Liguori Publications (809897). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Immigration: Understanding the Catholic Call” by Jim Graves

Long before immigrants, refugees, and migrants became the subjects of modern-day hot-button political debates, the Catholic Church addressed the question of whether people have the right to emigrate and immigrate. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), Part Three: “Life in Christ,” Section II: “The Family and Society” refers to a “right to emigrate” (CCC 2211). It further declares, “The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him” (CCC 2241).

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



God of peace, teach us
to be peacemakers,
to welcome the stranger,
and to seek common
ground with those who
seem different from us.
We pray in Jesus’ name.
Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 7–12

Monday, Weekday:

Gn 28:10–22a / Mt 9:18–26

Tuesday, Weekday:

Gn 32:23–33 / Mt 9:32–38

Wednesday, Weekday: Gn 41:55–57;

42:5–7a, 17–24a / Mt 10:1–7

Thursday, Weekday:

Gn 44:18–21, 23b–29; 45:1–5 / Mt 10:7–15

Friday, St. Benedict:

Gn 46:1–7, 28–30 / Mt 10:16–23

Saturday, Weekday: Gn 49:29–32; 50:15–26a /

Mt 10:24–33

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

July 6, 2025

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Bringing Home the Word

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 13, 2025

Love of the Law

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Years ago, I saw a chart that identified the faith of the Old Testament as a religion of law and that of the New Testament as a religion of love. This is not only seriously wrong, it is also dangerously biased. The two commandments to love as recorded in today's gospel originate in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, respectively. Several of the prophets describe God's love of Israel in tender, even passionate, terms. (See Isaiah 43:1, Jeremiah 31:3.) To think otherwise is to tread alarmingly close to a form of antisemitism. We must remember that the religion Jesus loved deeply, and

which he sought to bring to fulfillment, was the religion of ancient Israel.

Part of the error of that chart might have been a misunderstanding of the meaning of law. We might think of law as "proscription" or "restriction" (you must...or you must not...). The Hebrew meaning is more flexible. Some translate the Hebrew word *torah* as "instruction" or "directive." The psalmist delights in the law because it refreshes the soul and gladdens the heart. Today's first reading tells us that the law is already in our hearts. The law of love was certainly in the heart of the Samaritan who cared for the stranger on the side of the road.

If we can see that laws are meant to help us care for ourselves, others, and the world, we will soon realize that living as the laws direct us might bring us to a deep love for the law. †

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 30:10–14

[Moses said,] "No, it is something very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it."

Colossians 1:15–20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Luke 10:25–37

[Jesus said,] "A Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight."



*The psalmist delights
in the law because
it refreshes the soul
and gladdens the heart.*

A Word from Pope Francis (1936–2025)

The first Christians were called "*disciples of the Way*" (cf. Acts 9:2), that is, of the journey. In fact, believers strongly resemble the Samaritan—like him, the believer is on a journey, is a wayfarer... Along the way, he or she meets people, heals the sick, visits villages and cities. This is what the Lord did; he was always on the move.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 10, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I think of obeying the law as an act of love for the community?
- How do the rules in my home promote loving relationships?



Ministry to People on the Periphery

Fr. Michael McAndrew, CSsR

"Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach

all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the gospel" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 20).

What does it mean to be on the periphery?

It means to be unnoticed, on the fringes of society, on the margin, and living in the shadows. When people are unnoticed, it is easy to ignore them. If we do not recognize these people's presence, the ordinary life of parish communities may leave them on the periphery. Today, migration is a highly sensitive and divisive issue in the United States and Western Europe. Migrants are on the front pages of newspapers, but in Church ministry, they are often on the periphery.

Pope Benedict XVI states that international migration "requires bold, forward-looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively" (*Caritas in*

**Let our actions be
shaped by prayer
and discernment of
God's will for us.**

Veritate, 62). Understanding that no singular nation can address migration problems independently, he goes on to assert that "every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance."

In migration ministry, there are crosses and blessings. For all people serving migrants, we need to support each other. That support can be the comfort of prayer and sacraments, but it can also be standing with migrants in their times of trial and stress. It can mean taking public positions that are unpopular or controversial as dictated by the circumstances of each case. I admire the dedication of all people walking with migrants today. Whether we work in parishes, religious education, agriculture, education, social services, government service, or advocacy, let our actions be shaped by prayer and frequent evaluation and discernment of the will of God for us in our often divided world. †

From *Walk With My People: A Life in Migration Ministry* by Fr. Michael McAndrew, CSsR, Liguori Publications (828720). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Finding Your Way Through the Old Testament" by Virginia Smith

When I was twelve...I resolved to read the Bible, one chapter per day, until I finished. I plunged in, assuming I was about to read a book cover to cover, unaware that I was actually entering a library where not one but seventy-two books awaited me: books of poetry, songs, letters, allegories, historical sagas, and more. I treated them all alike under the impression that, no matter where you open it, the Bible is the Bible. It's helpful to know that the Old Testament is divided into four groups: 1. The Pentateuch (Greek for "five books"), also known as the Torah (Hebrew for "the Law"); 2. The Historical Books; 3. The Wisdom Books; and 4. The Prophetic Books.

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Ever-present God,
help me to look for you
in the interruptions,
the unexpected delays,
the setbacks, the chance
encounters. We pray
in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 14–19

Monday, St. Kateri Tekakwitha:
Ex 1:8–14, 22 / Mt 10:34–11:1


Tuesday, St. Bonaventure:
Ex 2:1–15a / Mt 11:20–24

Wednesday, Weekday:
Ex 3:1–6, 9–12 / Mt 11:25–27

Thursday, Weekday:
Ex 3:13–20 / Mt 11:28–30

Friday, Weekday:
Ex 11:10–12:14 / Mt 12:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Ex 12:37–42 / Mt 12:14–21

Bringing Home
the Word 

July 13, 2025

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Bringing Home the Word

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 20, 2025

Come On In!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Hospitality has been defined as entertaining your guests and caring for their needs. It is a gracious custom. However, in some ancient communities, it was necessary for survival. Travelers were vulnerable to the climate and topography of an unfamiliar area, as well as to its inhabitants. Every stranger was a potential enemy. Conversely, the traveler might be a thief, murderer, or a spy sent ahead to reconnoiter his enemies. People had to be on their guard, and travelers never really knew how others would receive them. They could be robbed by

their hosts, captured, enslaved, or even put to death.

To guarantee protection on all sides, a certain protocol of hospitality had to be presumed and observed. The host was expected to treat all travelers as guests, not as potential enemies. Such treatment was thought to neutralize any threat to the household. The traveler was expected to act as a guest rather than a threat, accepting the generosity of the host for necessary food, drink, and shelter. Such hospitality was a temporary arrangement, but it assured everyone of a degree of safety.

We see traces of this custom in the first reading from Genesis. Surprise! The visitors were no ordinary travelers. They were messengers from God. In the gospel reading, Jesus was a guest in the home of Martha and Mary. Their hospitality flowed from love, not social custom. Furthermore, he was no ordinary traveler. Both readings encourage us to practice hospitality. You never know who might appear as a guest. †



***In some ancient communities
hospitality was necessary
for survival.***

Sunday Readings

Genesis 18:1–10a

One of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son."

Colossians 1:24–28

It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.

Luke 10:38–42

The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing."

A Word from Pope Francis (1936–2025)

For many people, the rhythm of work is frenetic and wearisome. Summertime can be valuable also for opening the gospel and reading it slowly, without haste, a passage each day.... Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by those pages, asking ourselves how our life, my life, is going—if it is in line with what Jesus says, or not so much.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 17, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How can I make people feel welcome in my church, my neighborhood, my home?
- Do I feel welcome?



Sitting There All Peaceful and Quiet

Benignus O'Rourke, OSA

Some time ago, an elderly lady complained to me that she could no longer pray. "Father," she said, "I can't pray like I used to. I come here to church after my shopping and sit here all peaceful

and quiet. But I can't pray like I used to."

I tried to suggest that perhaps sitting there "all peaceful and quiet" was prayer. Maybe it was a gift God was offering her at this stage of her life. But she was not convinced. Prayer for her meant keeping her mind on the words, battling distractions, concentrating. Sitting there all peaceful and quiet would have seemed to her like laziness and failure.

What my parishioner was discovering, in fact, was one of God's loveliest gifts, the purest form of prayer. She rejected it because it was not what she had been taught. We feel we must make an effort to speak to God, to praise him, to give thanks, to ask for help.

But there are times when we cannot find the words, or when the well-known prayers that usually inspire and comfort us strike no chord in our hearts. Or we may be singing God's praises while our hearts are heavy or empty. And our hearts become heavier because our feelings do not match the words.

We are perhaps tired of words anyway. Tired of asking

God in words that have no life in them. Tired of thinking about God. Tired of being talked to about God. Tired of saying prayers that may be beautiful in themselves but are not bringing God closer to us.

Then, perhaps, it is best to simplify our prayers and follow the age-old advice to go from many

words to few words, from few words to one word, and from one word into silence. Sometimes when we pray, our words—any words—can be barriers. They come between us and God. The deepest communion with God comes through silence. †

From *Finding Your Hidden Treasure: The Way of Silent Prayer* by Benignus O'Rourke, OSA, Liguori Publications (820007). To order call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

**The deepest
communion
with God comes
through silence.**

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope"—
A Joint Letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and
Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano

Faith in the presence of Christ in the migrant leads to a conversion of mind and heart... [which] leads to communion expressed through hospitality on the part of receiving communities and a sense of belonging and welcome on the part of those in the communities where migrants are arriving. The New Testament often counsels that hospitality is a virtue necessary for all followers of Jesus. Many migrants, sensing rejection or indifference from Catholic communities, have sought solace outside the Church. They experience the sad fate of Jesus, recorded in St. John's Gospel: "He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him" (John 1:11).

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God of wisdom, help me
to quietly spend time
remembering your blessings
and considering what I can
do today to make my world
reflect your love. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 21–26

Monday, Weekday:

Ex 14:5–18 / Mt 12:38–42

Tuesday, St. Mary Magdalene: Sg 3:1–4b

or 2 Cor 5:14–17 / Jn 20:1–2, 11–18

Wednesday, Weekday:

Ex 16:1–5, 9–15 / Mt 13:1–9

Thursday, Weekday:

Ex 19:1–2, 9–11, 16–20b / Mt 13:10–17

Friday, St. James:

2 Cor 4:7–15 / Mt 20:20–28

Saturday: Sts. Joachim and Anne:

Ex 24:3–8 / Mt 13:24–30

Bringing Home
the Word 

July 20, 2025

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Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 27, 2025

The Power of Prayer

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

"I'll pray for you." What a simple promise. When we make this promise, what do we expect it will accomplish? The sentence is really a statement of faith. It assumes a caring relationship between us and those for whom we pray. It presumes that the other person trusts that we do care. Most importantly, it acknowledges that there is so much we humans cannot achieve by ourselves, and so we turn in confidence to God that our needs are the concern of God as well.

Today's first reading is the startling

account of Abraham's prayer for two sinful cities. He pleads with God to spare them for the sake of any righteous citizens found there. God is willing to do that if righteous citizens can be found. Abraham prays for people who do not deserve God's mercy. But there it was. God's mercy outstrips the most horrendous crimes. Abraham kept pleading with God, and God kept saying, "All right."

The same persistence in prayer is found in the gospel passage. The message there? Keep at it. We don't know whether the praying will end as Abraham's did or like that of the determined friend in the gospel. That's not our concern, because the way prayer is answered belongs to God, not to us. So then why pray if we can't be confident about the answer? Because we believe we are connected to each other, and together we stand in need before a loving God who wants the best for us. †



***We turn in confidence
to God that our needs are
the concern of God as well.***

A Word from Pope Francis (1936–2025)

Herein lies the novelty of Christian prayer! It is a dialogue between people who love each other, a dialogue based on trust, sustained by listening and open to a commitment to solidarity. It is the dialogue of a Son with his Father, a dialogue between children and their Father. This is Christian prayer.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 28, 2019



Sunday Readings

Genesis 18:20–32

The LORD replied: If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Colossians 2:12–14

You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God.

Luke 11:1–13

[Jesus said,] "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How often do I promise "I'll pray for you"?
- How often do I keep that promise?



Day in the Life of the Working Poor

Paige Byrne Shortal

This is a true story: A young mother's driver's license is about to expire. She goes to the local license office, with her toddler and infant in tow, and discovers that she needs her birth

certificate. She was born out of state.

She goes home and greets her husband, who works the morning shift caring for mentally disabled men in a group home, and gets ready for her evening shift in fast food. The next day, she calls the Department of Vital Records. After fifteen minutes on hold, she is told she needs a credit card in her own name to order her birth certificate by phone. To send for the certificate through the mail, she must download a form—she has a friend with a printer—and submit a cashier's check, a self-addressed, stamped envelope, a notarized application, and a copy of her driver's license.

***This is a true story.
Pray for the
working poor.***

The next day is Friday, and the baby has a cold. On Monday, she visits her friend with the printer, goes to the bank, buys a cashier's check, finds a notary, and mails it all from the post office. Three weeks later, her materials are returned in the mail with no birth certificate. Her driver's license has expired and is no longer valid identification.

She calls Vital Records again and is told that her husband can request her birth certificate, but the notarized form, cashier's check, and self-addressed envelope must be in his name. He gets home at 3:00 p.m. and must make the rounds before the bank and post office close—

with two babies. It takes three days.

When she finally receives her birth certificate, she will have to retake the driver's test. Meanwhile, this young woman is driving to work without a current license. None of these details will matter if she is caught and fined and/or arrested.

This woman's experience is not unique. Pray for the working poor. †

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Our Father: The Prayer Jesus Taught Us" by Gloria Hutchinson

The earliest and probably most authentic version of the Lord's Prayer is found in Luke's Gospel (Luke 11:2–4). It contains only five petitions (for the hallowing of God's name and the coming of the kingdom, daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance). The more familiar liturgical version appears in Matthew's Gospel (6:9–13), where Jesus offers the prayer as part of his Sermon on the Mount. Both forms of the prayer stress the fatherhood of God, the communal character of the Church, and our dependence on God, whose love sustains us day by day. The final doxology ("For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.") was added for liturgical emphasis early in the Church's history.

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Gracious God, hear the prayers of all your people everywhere and give us the grace of faith in your power to provide what we need. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 28–August 2

Monday, Weekday:

Ex 32:15–24, 30–34 / Mt 13:31–35

Tuesday, Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus:

Ex 33:7–11; 34:5b–9, 28 /
Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42

Wednesday, Weekday:

Ex 34:29–35 / Mt 13:44–46

Thursday, St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Ex 40:16–21, 34–38 / Mt 13:47–53

Friday, St. Alphonsus Liguori: Lv 23:1,

4–11, 15–16, 27, 34b–37 / Mt 13:54–58

Saturday, Weekday:

Lv 25:1, 8–17 / Mt 14:1–12

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July 27, 2025

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