

# **FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

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- Sun.    **The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
July 12 **OUR CALL TO EVANGELIZE**  
          A reflection from Announcing the Gospel by St. Pope Paul VI
- Mon.    **Monday of the 15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
13       **WHY NOT BELIEVE AND LIVE IN JESUS?**  
          From Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini
- Tues.   **Memorial, St. Kateri Tekakwitha**  
14       **SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA**
- Wed.    **Memorial, St. Bonaventure**  
15       **INCOMPLETE RELATIONSHIPS**  
          Fr Richard Rohr OFM
- Thurs.   **Memorial, Our Lady of Mount Carmel**  
16       **THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL**
- Fri.     **Friday of the 15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
17       **FAVORITE SAYINGS**  
          Fr. Jon Sobrino SJ
- Sat.     **Saturday of the 15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
18       **OUR LADY'S UNNOTICED GIFTS**  
          A reflection developed from a sermon by St. Bernard

*Sunday*

## **OUR CALL TO EVANGELIZE**

### **A reflection from Announcing the Gospel by St. Pope Paul VI**

As the herald of the Gospel the Church begins its task by evangelizing itself. The Church is a fellowship made up of believers. This means it is a fellowship of living and shared hope. It is also a fellowship of familial love. It needs to hear the heart of its faith continually proclaimed. It needs to recall the grounds of its hope. This all comes through the new commandment of love. The Church is the People of God, living in the world and frequently tempted by false gods. So we, as the Church, need to be reminded of God's mighty deeds and their call to conversion. We need to hear the Lord's call anew. We need to be gathered together again into unity. The Church always needs to listen to the Gospel message. The only way it can retain vigor and zeal and discover in itself the power to proclaim Christ's message is through this listening. The only way for the Church to evangelize others is by evangelizing itself and being continually converted and renewed.

We know the Church is, so to speak, the depository of the Good News. This news has to be made known to the entire human race. The promises of the New Covenant are already realized in Jesus the Christ. They have been entrusted to us. We have the teachings of our Lord and the apostles. We have the Word of Life. We have the well-spring of God's grace and loving kindness. We have the way of salvation. This is a life-giving and most precious heritage. We can't hide all this in the ground as one who receives a talent but is afraid to use it. It is only insofar as it is evangelized that the Church can be sent out to preach. It sends out evangelists to continue the work which brought its members of God. It puts the word of salvation into our mouths. We aren't commissioned to spread personal theories but the Gospel of Christ. The Church is a steward of its message. We can only be good stewards if we pass on what we have received.

The Church owes its origin to the preaching of the Good New by Jesus, and then by the Twelve. The Church was founded as a kind of connatural result of the labors of Jesus and the apostles. Recall what we hear in the Acts of the Apostles: "Those who accepted Peter's word were baptized and that day about three thousand persons joined the community; daily the Lord added to their number...". Jesus has returned to the Father in glory but the Church remains in the world as a sign of his continued presence; though the Lord has gone away He is still with us and in our midst. We are to live and work as continuing and extending that presence.

A Christian community can't be shut in upon itself but must feed on the Lord's teachings. This comes through the Breaking of the Bread. The mission of evangelizing is that of the entire Church and each individual member. The labor and prayer and love of each is important for the fulfillment of the task given the whole. We start with fervent prayer, then we listen to the word and then we continue by loving those we live with, even as we reach out to others. We do this in imitation of Jesus. This is God's good gift to each and all of us. Let us open our hearts and lives to receive and live it.

*Monday*

## **WHY NOT BELIEVE AND LIVE IN JESUS?**

A reflection from Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini

Public opinion is generally favorable to the figure of Jesus. Everyone knows, at least vaguely, the nobility of his message, his preference for the poor and humble, the way his life matches his words, and this from the simplicity of the stable in Bethlehem to the drama of the cross. If you don't limit yourself to vague recollections of catechism classes but read and re-read the Gospels themselves, you meet an unforgettable person. He utters strong and profound words on some of life's most important problems, and beyond this, He reaches out to every man and woman in the world, from the greatest to the least. He does it with an impressive authority, tenderness and clarity.

A careful reading of the Gospels, moreover, obliges us to go even further. Through many words and many incidents Jesus openly allows us to grasp that special intensity with which he sees and lives his existence as one among others. And all this, we learn, flows from a profound relationship with God the Heavenly Father, who is his father in a very intimate way. More, he tells us this relationship can be ours as well.

Jesus said stupendous things about the love of his merciful and exacting Father in Heaven! Jesus proclaimed that he wanted nothing more intensely than to do what this Father wills. In the terrible moments of agony in Gethsemane Jesus asks the Father to give him courage to give his all, his entire life, for the salvation of our race. Dying on the cross Jesus entrusted his life to the Heavenly Father and waited for the resurrection and the fullness of life and joy, but only as the Father might will to give all this to him.

Throughout his entire human life, Jesus revealed the mysterious unity existing between him and the Heavenly Father. Does this, and all the rest, provide us with good reasons to entrust ourselves to this honest, wise and generous human being—rather in the way he entrusted himself to the Father in Heaven? He was able to heal the sick, and even to raise the dead!

Why shouldn't we believe that the totally human life Jesus who lived among us reveals the designs—the longings and projects—of God for all of us? Why should anyone hesitate to believe that God, in immense love, has come among us in Jesus and genuinely lived our life with us here on this earth?

Then why hesitate to believe that this God calls you to live forever with Him and the Risen Jesus? And if we believe it, why not live it day by day so that others may come to share that faith? Think of the kind of life Jesus lived. We can show that such a life is one every human person can live and that living in this way transforms us, personally, and transforms our world.

*Tuesday*

## **Saint Kateri Tekakwitha**

The blood of martyrs is the seed of saints. Nine years after the Jesuits Isaac Jogues and Jean de Lelande, were tormented by warriors a baby girl was born near the place of their martyrdom, Auriesville, New York.

Her mother was a Christian Algonquin, taken captive by the Iroquois and given as a wife to the chief of the Mohawk clan. When she was four, she lost her parents and little brother in a smallpox epidemic that left her disfigured and half blind. She was adopted by her uncle, who succeeded her father as chief. He hated the coming of the Blackrobes-Jesuit missionaries-but could do nothing to them because a peace treaty with the French required their presence in the villages with Christian captives. She was moved by the words of three Blackrobes who lodged with her uncle, but fear of him kept her from seeking instruction. She refused to marry a Mohawk brave, and at age nineteen finally got the courage to take the step of converting. She was baptized with the name Kateri, Catherine, on Easter Sunday.

Now she would be treated as a slave. Because she would not work on Sunday, Kateri received no food on that day. Her life in grace grew rapidly. She told a missionary that she often meditated on the great dignity of being baptized. She was powerfully moved by the love of God for human beings and saw the dignity in each of her people.

She was always in danger, for her conversion and holy life created great opposition. On the advice of a priest, Kateri stole away one night and began a 200-mile walking journey to a Christian Indian village at Sault St. Louis, near Montreal.

For three years she grew in holiness under the direction of a priest and an older Iroquois woman, giving herself totally to God in long hours of prayer. At 23, she took a vow of virginity, an unprecedented act for an Indian woman whose future depended on being married. She found a place in the woods where she could pray an hour a day, and was accused of meeting a man there!

Going to Montreal she and 2 friends tried to start a community, but the local priest dissuaded her. She humbly accepted an "ordinary" life. Kateri died on the afternoon of Holy Thursday and witnesses said her emaciated face changed color and became the face of a healthy child. She was beatified in 1980 and canonized in 2012. St John Paul 2 made her a patron of World Youth Day. He called her "the best-known witness of Christian holiness among the native people of North America"

*Wednesday*

## **Incomplete Relationships**

Fr Richard Rohr OFM

Throughout my life, I can honestly say-and this is not just a cliché- that the closer I have come to the Light, the more I have seen my own darkness and hypocrisy, that I only half believe what I teach. You have heard me say 'I talk it better than I live it'. And I'm always grateful to God for letting me talk about it; but one reason I can talk about it is because I am constantly losing it, not living up to it, seeing my phoniness and my false self. I really need to preach to myself. On my best days, am I fully living in the divine light more than one hour? I hope so. But even that is enough. It is enough to know that I have at least tasted the real world.

As I look back, I see the incompleteness of so many relationships. Maybe part of it is because I have met so many people on my travels for speaking engagements, and we spend time together and have wonderful conversations, but then I leave the next day. Or people will write me for a short period, and maybe I will give them some advice, and we will have a delightful exchange for some weeks, but then it peters out.

Not all friendships can be maintained your entire life. It may not be either person's fault. It is just that our lives go in different directions. Sometimes I have had to work through feelings of rejection, betrayal, abandonment, or hurt. I think there is always a bit of guilt or shame, asking myself 'What did I do wrong? Should I have called him or her after we drifted apart? Or was the relationship only for a time? Have I ever really loved anybody?' These questions are agonizing and accusing.

I know it is not possible to have time for many relationships but I still feel guilty. 'Did you live up to that relationship Richard? Did it really mean anything to you? Do you love people or do you just let people move in and out of your life?

Incarnation is always concrete. In marriage people have one person to love. Celibacy well lived should drive us out to others and towards God. God has to be my daily lover and companion on the journey. St Bonaventure says "God is an intelligible space whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. God is within all things, but not enclosed, outside all things but not excluded, above all things but not aloof, below all things but not debased. God is all in all."

*Thursday*

## **The story of Our Lady of Mount Carmel**

Hermits lived on Mount Carmel near the fountain of Elijah in Northern Israel in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They had a special chapel dedicated to our Lady. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century they became known as “Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel”. They soon celebrated a special Mass and Office in honor of Mary. In 1726, it became a celebration of the universal Church under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For centuries the Carmelites have seen themselves as specially related to Mary. Their great saints and theologians have promoted devotion to her and often championed the mystery of her Immaculate Conception.

Saint Teresa of Avila called Carmel “the Order of the Virgin”. Saint John of the Cross credited Mary with saving him from drowning as a child, thus leading him to Carmel, and helping him escape from prison. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus believed that Mary cured her from illness. On her First Communion day, Therese dedicated her life to Mary. During the last days of her life she frequently spoke to Mary.

There is a tradition that Mary appeared to Saint Simon Stock, a leader of the Carmelites, and gave him a scapular, telling him to promote devotion to it. The scapular is a modified version of Mary’s own garment. It symbolizes her special protection and calls the wearers to consecrate themselves to her in a special way. The scapular reminds us of the Gospel call to prayer and penance—a call that Mary models in a splendid way.

The Carmelites were known from early on as “Brothers of our Lady of Mount Carmel”. The title suggests that they saw Mary as Mother and as sister. The word “sister” is a reminder that Mary is very close to us. She is the daughter of God and therefore can help us to be authentic daughters and sons of God. She also helps us to grow in appreciation of being sisters and brothers to one another. She leads us to a new realization that all human beings belong to the family of God. When such a conviction grows, there is hope that the human race can find its way to peace.

*Friday*

## **Favorite Sayings**

Fr. Jon Sobrino SJ

I remember many aphorisms or, rather sayings, that have impacted me. I will mention a few: “With Archbishop Romero God visited El Salvador” (Ignatio Ellacuria). And then the words of Archbishop Romero himself “I am glad brothers and sisters, that our Church is being persecuted. It is a sign that it is being incarnated in the poor. It would be very sad, if in a country where it is being so horribly murdered, there were no murdered priests”. Another Jesuit friend of mine wrote “We must carry out the revolution like someone who has been forgiven”. The great Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner wrote “Being a Christian is the simplest thing. The Gospel is a heavy burden, a light burden, the more you carry it, the more it carries you “. Two other sayings I have come across touch me deeply “For Jesus, God is a Father in whom he can rest; and the Father is a God who never lets him rest” and “God is good and it is good that there is God”.

Words are important but in my life words and texts, while meaning a great deal to me, are less than reality. As a Jesuit, I love the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. And the same can be said of the writings of Saint Irenaeus, which are beautiful or the words of Saint Paul, which are inspired. To put it this way, I see God present, not only in the Word of Scripture, which I believe in through faith, in addition to which one can see how the Word generates life, but also in reality, which I have the privilege of witnessing. Seeing an Archbishop Romero speaking the truth, loving with all his heart, that is much more than reading the life of a saint even though the text is excellent. We must reverence the Magisterium of the Church, the Fathers of the Church, and in a unique way the Scriptures. But to look at these texts in themselves without connection to lived reality, I do not think is doing theology. For me, it is to see with the help of these texts, how God is present in our reality is doing theology. If we combine words and reality, we can truly see the face of God.

*Saturday*

## **OUR LADY'S UNNOTICED GIFTS**

A reflection developed from a sermon by St. Bernard

“Hail, Mary, full of grace”, said the angel. He said to a virgin but her fullness of grace didn't consist only in her virginity. Not everyone receives the gift of remaining a virgin and the Lord shows us in Mary that He has more than one blessing. Even if one has not preserved virginity one can still come to Mary and plead with her that the Lord may share with us her other gifts.

The angel came to a most humble young woman of Nazareth and her beauty was the result of her humility as much as of her virginity. Many are virgins but not all are humble and their virginity will count for nothing if they don't learn humility. We come to Mary as Abraham's servant came to Rebecca when he was seeking a wife for Isaac. He came to her at a well and found her drawing water. When he asked her for a drink, without hesitation she lowered her jar and shared her water with him, and then gave water to his beasts as well. She was most humble and delighted to serve even in lowly ways.

Mary, if I come to you and ask you for a drink will you share with me that humility which was among your principle beauties and adornments? Give me to drink from the water which gives strength to serve and to love. Give me the water of life which comes to us from the fruit of your womb. For you are not only a virgin, you are not only humble, but you are also fruitful.

God always looks upon the humble with love and lifts them up by many graces to rejoice with him and in his Kingdom. Lift me up, Lord, and give me the strength I need not only to be humble but to love and serve as did your lowly handmaiden. The water that Mary draws has been given her by the Son after he turned it into wine. That is what happens when humility is joined to the strength that is from God and that flows forth to give joy to every human heart that will receive it. You, O Lord, have invited us to your very own wedding banquet as you join yourself with our race and take on all that comes with our humanity—including weakness and lowliness. You changed these seemingly insignificant things into strength and joy at the prayer of your servant, virgin and mother.

The fruitfulness of Mary, the unexpected and marvelous fruitfulness of one who was a virgin and knew no man, was made fruitful for the entire world when you made her virginal womb fruitful by the incarnation of you only Son. Who could be stronger than he? Who could lavish greater and more wondrous gifts on all who are lowly and give a “Yes” in response to every request?

Mary, lower your jar that I may drink! Let me drink of the blood of your Holy Son, our Lord Jesus. Let me draw strength from him that I too may be twice humble, because I was not strong enough to be like you as a virgin. It is in that humility that I answer with my “Yes” to the call by which you send me to love others even as you Son and our brother has loved them. Let the water of the Holy Spirit's grace cause me to conceive in my heart the Lord Jesus and let me share the water of life that flows from him even as you do. O Virgin, humble and fruitful may I too become fruitful by imitating your humility and turning with you to God so my every moment shall be a “Yes”. Let all be done in me according to your will!