

# **NINETEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME**

12-17 August 2024

**SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
PATRONESS OF OUR ORDER**

.....

Sun.      **The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Aug. 11   **HOW CHRIST'S REAL PRESENCE TRANSFORMS US**  
A Reflection from God's Way to be Human by Fr. G. Preston

Mon.      **Monday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
12         **PROCLAIMING THE GLORY OF THE LORD**  
A Reflection developed from St. Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel

Tues.     **Tuesday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
13         **THE SHOULDERS OF JESUS**  
A Reflection by Fr. John of Avila

Wed.      **The Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe**  
14         **OBEDIENCE AND LEADING ALL TO SALVATION**  
A Letter by St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe

Thurs.    **SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**  
15         **A MYSTERY OF HOPE AND JOY FOR ALL OF US**  
From the Angelus Address of Pope Benedict XVI, 15 August 2011

## **MONASTIC DESERT DAY**

Fri.      **Friday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
16         **GOD IS NOT AN EQUATION**  
From the Morning Meditation by Pope Francis, 20 May 2016

Sat.      **Saturday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
17         **BRINGING CHRIST TO OTHERS**  
From Letters to St. Ignatius from Francis Xavier

*Sunday*

## **HOW CHRIST'S REAL PRESENCE TRANSFORMS US** **A Reflection from God's Way to be Human by Fr. G. Preston, OP**

Christ offers himself in the Eucharist as food and drink. When we eat at this table we declare we are ready to feed on him in all the ways he offers himself. The Imitation of Christ talks about the table of the Word as well as the table of the Sacrament. Ignatius of Antioch tells us that faith itself is the substance of the Christian life: "Believe and you have fed", says St. Augustine. We "eat" the flesh of the Son of Man sacramentally in the Eucharist, at the table of the Word, and by caring for his suffering members.

Now, this can't be done one time and that's enough. The Eucharist, for instance, feeds desire and longing; we have to keep eating at all these tables continually. We are longing for the Kingdom of God. What we do when we eat and drink Christ is deeply linked to that coming. Whenever we eat and drink Christ we, as it were, hold up a placard proclaiming the death of the Lord until he comes. Christ is food for our journey and Christ is the end of the journey. As we pray for his coming He does come, in signs. But the signs realize Christ's real presence. The signs are transformed into Him really. We go on telling our God we are waiting for the final coming of Jesus Christ and as we do this we are made aware that He is with us now. We go on doing this until the end becomes "now".

Now we eat together. We eat the banquet God has prepared for us and we wish peace for one another in ways that realize not only peace but unity. These are proper to the Kingdom of God where Jesus and we live forever. What we do now is a prophetic sign by which we act out his real presence now even as we wait for its fullest real presence. That brings us into a situation where what unites us is the Word of God, one loaf and a common cup and one service and a shared love. All this finds its significance from the death of Jesus to the world and his living for God. Jesus is thus God's way of being human. The loaf and the cup are the way to a new and true humanity embodied in our world and this is what makes us one.

The Kingdom of God is the unity of mankind in Christ. That unity will be Christ. He is the lamb of the Book of Revelation with the marks of slaughter still upon him, the one hanged bearing wounds that were never healed but glorified. Here and now we are invited to let ourselves be taken into that unity and live as though we were already transformed in Him. In doing this we fix our destiny more and more fervently. We already feel ourselves at home in what is still to be and more and more disposed to live like Jesus in what still has to be accomplished. This is the realization of the sacrament of peace and unity. It may feel like a game of pretend but like the games of childhood it prepares us for adulthood in which we put on the full humanity of Christ.

*Monday*

## **PROCLAIMING THE GLORY OF THE LORD**

### **A Reflection developed from St. Jerome's commentary on Ezekiel**

"I heard someone speaking to me from within the Temple". Ezekiel could only have been hearing the Lord. "Son of Man this is the place of my throne, the place where I set my feet, and where I shall dwell among my people forever". As God once dwelt in the Jerusalem Temple, so God now dwells in the Church, among a People drawn together by their common recognition of the One Lord who is Christ. And God has promised to dwell in and among us forever! The Psalmist adds, "God's dwelling place shall be peace", the peace that surpasses all understanding!

In Christ "the earth shone with God's glory". It is glory made known by the preaching of Christ, first by the apostles and then by all who live in imitation of Christ. We are to make visible this glory. It is through our words and deeds this glory is seen to the utmost bounds of the world. For Ezekiel God's voice was like the sound of raging waters or that sound of the many peoples throughout the world and its history who proclaim by their lives the glorious salvation of Christ. We make really present the mystery of God's redeeming love. To the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we all sing and will ever sing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; heaven & earth are full of God's glory!"

Do you think that your life is too quiet to serve as a trumpet proclaiming the glory of God? God, Ezekiel said prophetically, enters by the "east gate", the gate of mercy. The trumpet that proclaims God unforgettably is that of mercy shown forth in deeds of supporting love.

It seemed to Ezekiel that God's People lived under wrath and punishment. But he proclaimed that the Lord was coming again to them and coming in mercy. The Lord has come to that temple made of living stones which is God's Church. "The spirit of the Lord lifted me up and brought me into the outer court of the Temple and behold, the Lord's House was filled with glory!" It is a glory that dwells in this House, one that abides there never to depart as it did of old.

How is that possible? Because the Temple of the Lord is Christ and Christ abides always in the Church, and we are members of the Body that is that Church. So the glory of the Lord, the merciful glory of the Lord, will show itself through us forever. But that means it is showing itself now. You already are dwellings of the Holy Spirit and so proclamations of God's merciful love. That is the meaning of all you say and do every day. By God's mercy, it is something much greater than you could cause. Through you, God's works the miracles of his loving mercy for all.

*Tuesday*

## **THE SHOULDERS OF JESUS**

### **A Reflection by Fr. John of Avila**

“Jesus told this parable: Which of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one, wouldn’t leave the ninety-nine to go look for the missing one until he found it?” Lord Jesus, you came looking for lost sheep and you placed each one on your shoulders. Imagine a prince leaving his Father’s royal palace with its table and its music and coming to wherever there were lost sheep. Moreover, he put on their own garment of humanity and accepted their toils.

Can you imagine a starry sky as beautiful as the sight of Jesus Christ coming with lost sheep in his arms? If a little sheep is a bit rebellious he doesn’t strike it and if it wants to be put down he still doesn’t put it down. O blessed shoulders of Jesus Christ! What does it mean to say Jesus takes the sheep on his shoulders? It means what washing the feet of his disciples meant. He washes them and he kisses them and he says: My disciples, do you understand what I have done? Don’t you see that I mean you to wash one another’s feet as I, your Lord and Master, have washed yours? Then Jesus says, Do you see me coming with this little sheep on my shoulders? I am trying to tell you that you are to bear one another’s burdens and toils and difficulties. Don’t be like those whose shoulders seem made of pastry dough; who answer if they are told to be peacemakers: Why are you trying to involve me in other people’s quarrels?

To travel on the shoulders of Jesus Christ means that your fasting, almsgiving and prayers have special value. Precisely because you are on Christ’s shoulders you are supported by his merits. Apart from them, your words are worthless. So get up on his shoulders. He has gained everything by carrying our sins on his cross, on his shoulders. Get up on his shoulders because while he is carrying you God will not give you what you deserve, justice!

Jesus will say to the Heavenly Father, Lord, if you won’t forgive them because they are my servants consider that they are my brothers and sisters and brides. If this is not enough notice that they are my members and are one with me. If it is not possible to punish the members without punishing the Head, then being my members should be reason enough. And think of yourself! Their being members of Jesus Christ is quite enough reason to love and help others. If you saw Jesus and gave him what he needed that wouldn’t deserve great praise. Even wicked people would do that. But if you receive the poor because they belong to Christ, and because he commands it, that is a sign of great love. Just as he took us on his shoulders so let us take our brothers and sisters on ours. You don’t have wax shoulders that can’t support any weight. The members of Christ have his shoulders.

*Wednesday*

## **OBEDIENCE AND LEADING ALL TO SALVATION**

### **A Letter by St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe**

Dear Brethren, I am filled with great joy because of the glowing zeal that motivates you to promote God's glory. This glory is especially resplendent in the salvation of souls, redeemed by Christ's blood. Let this be the chief goal of our apostolic work, the salvation and sanctification of the greatest number of souls.

I shall tell you briefly the most suitable way to attain this end. God who is infinite knowledge and wisdom, and who consequently knows best what we must do to promote his glory, makes his will known to us, particularly through those who take his place on earth. It is therefore obedience, and only obedience, which clearly shows us God's will.

It can happen, to be sure, that a superior makes a mistake. But it cannot happen that in following obedience we make a mistake. There is an exception to obedience only when a superior commands something that would clearly be a violation of God's law, even in a very small matter. In such a case the individual would not be the interpreter of God's will.

God, and only God, is infinite, most wise, most holy, a most loving Lord, our father and creator, our beginning and our end, our wisdom, power and love. God is our all. Everything outside of God has value only insofar as it is referred to God, who is the creator of all things, the redeemer of humankind, the final end of all creation. God it is, who makes known his adorable will through those who take his place on earth. God draws us to himself and through us the souls of others with whom God intends to unite in more perfect love.

Dear Brethren, see the greatness of human dignity, conferred by God's mercy. By obedience we surmount, so to speak, the limits imposed upon us by our weakness. We are made to conform to God's will which in infinite wisdom and prudence guides us to act correctly. As a matter of fact, by clinging to God's will—and no creature can resist it—we surpass everything in power. This is the way of wisdom and prudence; this is the only way we can render the greatest glory to God. If there were another and more suitable way, Christ surely would have shown it to us by his own words and example.

Therefore, my brethren, let us love our most loving Father in Heaven with the greatest love and let our obedience be the proof of our perfect love, which we put into practice especially when we are asked to give up our own will. There is no more authoritative book to teach us how to grow in God's love than the book of Jesus crucified. We shall achieve all this through the Immaculate Virgin, whom a most loving God in his mercy gave us. There is no doubt that Mary's will in our regard is the will of God. When we dedicate ourselves to her we become instruments of God's mercy, just as she was in God's hands. Let us feel calm and safe under her guidance.

*Thursday*

## **A MYSTERY OF HOPE AND JOY FOR ALL OF US**

**From the Angelus Address of Pope Benedict XVI, 15 August 2011**

In the heart of August Christians of both East and West jointly celebrate the Feast of the Assumption into Heaven of Mary Most Holy. In the Catholic Church, the Dogma of the Assumption — as is well known — was proclaimed in the Holy Year of 1950 by my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Pope Pius XII. The roots of this commemoration, however, are deeply embedded in the faith of the early centuries of the Church.

In the East, it is still known today as the “Dormition of the Virgin”. An ancient mosaic in the Basilica of St Mary Major, Rome, that was inspired precisely by the Eastern image of the “Dormitio”, portrays the Apostles, who, alerted by Angels of the end of the earthly life of the Mother of Jesus, gathered at the Virgin’s bedside. In the center is Jesus, who has a little girl in his arms: she is Mary, who has become “little” for the Kingdom, being taken to Heaven by the Lord.

In the passage of today’s liturgy from St Luke’s Gospel, we read that “in those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah” (Lk 1:39). In those days Mary hastened from Galilee to a little town in the neighborhood of Jerusalem to go and see her kinswoman Elizabeth. Today we contemplate her going up towards God’s mountain and entering the heavenly Jerusalem, “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1).

The biblical passage of the Book of Revelation, which we read in the liturgy of this Solemnity, speaks of a struggle between the woman and the dragon, between good and evil. St John seems to be presenting to us anew the very first pages of the Book of Genesis that recount the dark and tragic event of the sin of Adam and Eve. Our first parents were defeated by the Evil One; in the fullness of time, Jesus, the new Adam, and Mary, the new Eve, were to triumph over the enemy once and for all, and this is the joy of this day! With Jesus’ victory over evil, inner and physical death are also defeated.

Mary was the first to take in her arms Jesus, the Son of God, become a child; she is now the first to be beside him in the glory of Heaven.

Today we are celebrating a great mystery. It is above all a mystery of hope and joy for all of us: in Mary we see the destination for which are bound all who can interpret their life according to the life of Jesus, who are able to follow him as Mary did. This Feast, then, speaks of our future. It tells us that we too shall be beside Jesus in God’s joy and invites us to take heart, to believe that the power of Christ’s Resurrection can also work in us, making us men and women who seek every day to live as risen ones, bringing the light of goodness into the darkness of the evil in the world.

Friday

## **GOD IS NOT AN EQUATION**

**From the Morning Meditation by Pope Francis, 20 May 2016**

“Jesus is so merciful”, Pope Francis insisted, “he is so great that never, never, never does he close the door to sinners”. You can see this when he asks them: “What did Moses command you? What did Moses command you?”. The answer is that “Moses permitted the writing of an act of repudiation”. And “it’s true, it’s true”. But Jesus responds in this way: “It was because of your hardness of heart that he wrote this rule for you”.

Here, the Pontiff said, “is the fullness of truth, the truth that is powerful and blunt, but there is also human weakness and hardness of heart”. And “Moses, the legislator, did this, but things remain clear: the truth is one thing, while the hardness of heart is another that is the sinful condition of us all”. Therefore, “Jesus leaves the door open here to God’s forgiveness, but at home to the disciples, he repeats the truth: ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery’”. Jesus “states it in a clear and blunt manner: ‘And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery’”.

The Gospel passage speaks to us of “the truths that Jesus gives us, which are full truths, given by God, the Father, which are always this way”. It also shows us “the way”, that is, “the way in which Jesus acts before sinners: with forgiveness, leaving the door open”. And “in this reference to Moses, he leaves a little something for the forgiveness of people who failed to carry out this compromise”. Moreover, even “today, in this world in which we live, with this culture of the provisional, this reality of sin is so strong”.

Jesus, “recalling Moses, tells us that there is hardness of heart, there is sin”. But “you can do something: forgiveness, understanding, accompaniment, integration, the discernment of these cases”; with the understanding that “truth can never be sold, never”. Jesus “is able to speak this truth, which is so great, and at the same time he is forgiving towards sinners, towards the weak”. However, “this small group of enlightened theologians, who fall into their case studies, are both incapable of great horizons and of loving and understanding human weakness”.

“We must walk with these two things that Jesus teaches us: truth and understanding,” Pope Francis said. And “this cannot be resolved like a mathematical equation”, but “with flesh itself: that is to say, as a Christian, I help that person, I help those marriages that are facing difficulty, that are wounded, on their path to approaching God”. The fact remains that “that is the truth, but this is another truth: we are all sinners, on the road”. And “there is always this work to do: how to help, how to accompany, but also how to teach those who want to get married what the truth is about marriage”.

In conclusion, Pope Francis expressed his hope “that Jesus may teach us to have in our hearts a great adherence to truth and also a great understanding and support for all of our brothers who are in difficulty”. And “this is a gift: it is what the Holy Spirit teaches, not those enlightened doctors who, in order to teach us, need to reduce the fullness of God to a case study and equation”.

*Saturday*

## **BRINGING CHRIST TO OTHERS**

### **From Letters to St. Ignatius from Francis Xavier**

Many, many people hereabouts do not become Christian for one reason only: There is nobody to make them Christian. Again and again, I have thought of going the rounds of the universities of Europe and everywhere crying out like a madman to rivet the attention of people with more learning than charity: What a tragedy! How many are being shut out of heaven and falling into hell, thanks to you! I wish they would work as hard at this task as they do at their books, and so settle their account with God for the gift of their learning and the talents entrusted to them.

This thought would certainly stir most of them to meditate on spiritual realities, to listen actively to what God is saying. They would forget their own desires and human affairs and give themselves over entirely to God's will and choice. They would cry out with all their heart: Lord, here I am! What do you want me to do? Send me anywhere you like—even to India.

I have seen myself beset by many dangers, both from storms and from enemies. For example, on a voyage from Cape Comorin to Malacca the ship I was on sailed for more than a league, running before a strong wind, constantly scraping the seafloor with its keel. If it had encountered shallower water we would have been stranded. God, our Lord, wishes to try us by means of such dangers to let us know how little hope we have if we hope in our own strength or trust in created things, but how great is our hope if we rise above such things and confide in the Creator of all. God's hand it is that makes us strong when dangers are encountered for the love of God.

Since such dangers are accepted for God's love alone, one scarcely knows how to speak or write about what happens. God simply gives us a remembrance of what we have experienced, and what we have been saved from, so that we do not cease to serve so good a Lord, whether in the present or in the future. We trust in a Lord whose mercies are without end. God gives the strength to serve.

We have visited the villages of new converts. They have no priests and only know they are Christians. There is no one to teach them the Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the commandments of God's law. I have not stopped making the rounds of these villages. I bathed in the sacred waters all the children who had not yet been baptized. I have thus purified a very large number of children so young that they could not, as the saying goes, tell their right hand from their left. The other children would not let me pray the Divine Office or eat or sleep until I taught them one prayer or another.

The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these. How can anyone refuse to lead such little ones to Jesus? Everywhere there are so many who need only someone to speak to them, to give them an example, and to help them come to Jesus and salvation.