

# **THE TWENTY-NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME**

20-26 October 2024

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Sunday

## TRUE GLORY

### From the Angelus Message of Pope Francis, 17 October 2021

The Gospel of today's Liturgy (*Mk 10:35-45*) narrates that two disciples, James and John, ask the Lord to one day sit beside him in glory. But the other disciples hear this and become indignant. At that point, Jesus patiently offers them a great teaching: true glory is not obtained by rising over others, but by experiencing the same baptism that He would receive just a little later in Jerusalem, that is, the cross. The word "baptism" means "immersion": through his Passion, Jesus immersed himself into death, offering his life to save us. Therefore, his glory, the glory of God, is love that becomes service, not power that seeks to dominate. But love that becomes service. Thus, Jesus ends by saying to his disciples and to us as well: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (v. 43). In order to become great, you will have to take the path of service, serving others.

We are in front of two different types of logic: the disciples want to *rise up* and Jesus wants to *immerse Himself*. Let us consider these two verbs. The first is *to rise up*. It expresses that worldly mentality to which we are always tempted: to experience everything, including relationships, in order to feed our ambition, to reach important positions. The quest for personal prestige can become *spiritual malady* masquerading itself even behind good intentions. And we see this even in the Church. How many times, do we Christians, who should be servants, try to climb up, to get ahead? We should thus, always evaluate our heart's real intentions, asking ourselves: "Why am I carrying out this work, this responsibility? To offer service or rather to be recognized"? Jesus contrasts this worldly logic with his own: instead of exalting yourself over others, getting off the pedestal to serve them; instead of rising above others, immersing one's self in the lives of others. Looking and lowering ourselves in service and not seeking to climb up for one's own glory.

Here then is the second verb: *to be immersed*. Jesus asks us to immerse ourselves. And how should we immerse ourselves? Compassionately in the lives of those we meet. When we have a meal before us, which is a grace from God that we can eat, many people work and are unable to have enough food. Do we think about this? Immersing ourselves with compassion, having compassion. And do I have compassion for people? Compassion for the lives of those we meet, as Jesus did with me, with you, with all of us, he drew near with compassion.

Let us look at the Crucified Lord, completely immersed in our wounded history, and we will discover God's way of doing things. We see that he did not remain above but he lowered himself to wash our feet. God is love and love is humble, it does not exalt itself but comes down like the rain that falls to earth and brings life. But how can we adopt the same direction as Jesus, going from raising ourselves up to immersing ourselves? Dedication is needed. It is difficult alone, but not impossible, for we have a strength within that helps us. It is the strength of Baptism, of that *immersion in Jesus* that all of us have already received through grace that directs us to put ourselves at the service of others. It is a grace, a fire that the Spirit has kindled in us that needs to be nurtured. Today, let us ask the Holy Spirit to renew the grace of Baptism in us, that immersion in Jesus, in his way of being, to be more like servants, to be servants as he has been with us.

*Monday*

## **MONEY HELPS, COVETOUSNESS KILLS**

**From the Morning Meditation by Pope Francis on 21 October 2013**

Pope Francis commented on the day's Gospel passage taken from St Luke (12:13-21), in which a man asks Jesus to tell his brother to divide his inheritance with him. The Lord responds to the request with a parable about a rich man who contemplates new ways of storing his earthly treasure in the abundance of his wealth, only to discover that his life would be taken from him that very night.

The parable illustrates the problems often caused by an attachment to money, the Pope said. "How many families have we seen destroyed by problems over money: brother against brother; father against sons!". He continued, "When a person is attached to money he destroys himself, he destroys his family".

However, the demonization of money is not the answer, the Bishop of Rome noted: "Money contributes greatly to many good works for the development of the human race". The real problem is a distorted use of money, attachment, and greed. Hence the Lord's warning: "Take heed and beware of all covetousness" (Lk 12:15).

The Pope explained that covetousness and the constant ambition to have more and more money "leads to idolatry" and ends in destroying "our relationships with others". It causes man to become spiritually ill by leading him into a vicious cycle in which his thoughts are consumed by money.

Covetousness is so dangerous "because it takes us down a road opposed to the one God has traced out for man". Indeed, quoting the Apostle Paul, the Pontiff said: "Jesus Christ, though he was rich made himself poor to enrich us". There are two roads man can take: "God's road of humility, of bending down to serve" or "the road of covetousness, which ends in idolatry".

Pope Francis noted that this is why Jesus speaks so forcefully about the attachment to money: "For example, when he tells us: 'you cannot serve two masters' or when he exhorts us 'not to worry, for the Lord knows what you need'; or again when he leads us to trustful surrender to the Father, who makes the lilies of the field grow and feeds the birds of the air".

The attitude of the rich man in the parable stands in sharp contrast to this attitude of trust in divine mercy. The rich man could only think about the abundance of grain he had harvested and the goods he had accumulated. "He could have said to himself: 'I will give this to someone else in order to help them'. Instead, covetousness ruled his thoughts and led him to say: 'I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods'".

Covetousness, the Pope added, is an attitude that conceals the ambition to attain a kind of "idolatrous divinity". The rich man's own words bear witness to this: "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry". However, the Pope noted, this is precisely when God leads him back to the reality of his utter creatureliness. "Fool! This night your soul is required of you".

"The road [of covetousness] is foolishness for it leads us away from life; it destroys human brotherhood". In contrast, the royal road the Lord paved for us "is not a path to poverty for poverty's sake" but rather "an instrument so that God might remain God and the only Lord" of our lives.

Pope Francis concluded, praying: "May the Lord's word remain in our hearts today" for "even if a man has an abundance of wealth, his life does not consist in his possessions".

Tuesday

## From the DEED FOR THE PIOUS TRANSFER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

In the light of Christ risen from the dead, on 2 April A.D. 2005, at 9:37 p.m., while Saturday was drawing to a close and we were already beginning the Lord's Day, the Octave of Easter and Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church's beloved Pastor, John Paul II, departed this world for the Father. The whole Church, especially the young, accompanied his passing with prayers.

John Paul II was the 264th Pope. His memory lives on in the Church and in all human hearts. Karol Wojtyła, elected Pope on 16 October 1978, was born in Wadowice, 50 k. from Krakow, on 18 May 1920. He was baptized two days later in the parish church by the parish priest, Fr Francesco Zak.

He received his First Holy Communion at the age of 9 years old and the sacrament of Confirmation when he was 18. His studies were interrupted by the invasion of the Nazis who shut down the university; he went to work in a quarry and later in the Solvay chemical factory.

From 1942 forward, feeling that he was called to be a priest, he took the formation courses provided by the clandestine seminary in Krakow. On 1 November 1946, he was ordained a priest by Cardinal Adam Sapieha. He was then sent to Rome where he earned a licentiate and a doctorate in theology.

He returned to Poland where he worked in pastoral ministry and taught the sacred disciplines. On 4 July 1958, Pope Pius XII appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow, of which Paul VI appointed him Bishop in 1964. It was in this capacity that he participated in the Second Vatican Council. Paul VI created him a Cardinal on 26 June 1967.

The Cardinals elected him Pope at the Conclave on 16 October 1978, and he took the name of John Paul II. On 22 October, he solemnly inaugurated his Petrine ministry.

John Paul II's Pontificate was one of the longest in the history of the Church. In this period we have seen many changes, in many aspects. The list includes the fall of several regimes to which he himself contributed; and in order to proclaim the Gospel he traveled to various nations.

John Paul II exercised the Petrine ministry with a tireless missionary spirit, devoting to it all his energy. He was sustained throughout by the *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* and by his love for all. He had more Meetings than any of his Predecessors with the People of God, the leaders of Nations, in Celebrations and at General and Private Audiences, as well as during his Pastoral Visits.

His love for young people made him inclined to establish the World Youth Days, to which he summoned millions of young people in various parts of the world.

He successfully encouraged dialogue with the Jews and with the representatives of other religions, whom he several times invited to prayer meetings for peace, especially the meetings in Assisi.

Under his guidance, the Church prepared herself for the third millennium and celebrated the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 in accordance with the instructions given in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. The Church then faced the new epoch, receiving his instructions in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, in which he pointed out to the faithful their future path.

He promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in the light of Tradition, authoritatively interpreted by the Second Vatican Council.

John Paul II has bequeathed to all a wonderful witness of piety, of a holy life, and of universal fatherhood.

Wednesday

## HOW DOES ONE WAIT FOR THE LORD?

### A Reflection from a Homily by St. Macarius of Egypt

We have heard very often that those who wish to be found worthy of eternal life must become a dwelling place for Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are told that such people must produce the fruits of the Spirit and keep the commandments of Christ purely and blamelessly. But one begins all this by first believing steadfastly in the Lord and by devoting oneself as entirely as possible to obeying the commandments and to renouncing worldly interests; i.e., one must free the mind from immersion in secular affairs.

But when we hear this, even we monks tremble for we know we are sinners and that all of the things we have listed are beyond our unaided human powers. But then we recall, by God's gift, that none of this depends simply upon us. It is all a gift of God. But how, then, are we to know we have received this gift?

Do you find you persevere in prayer and do so as ceaselessly as you can? Are you always waiting in expectant faith for the Lord to visit and assist you? Do you keep this goal constantly in view? But we know that sin is within us and that all our efforts don't seem to be sufficient. But this very thought is a beginning. For example, we are to make every effort to do good and do it by showing humility. Isn't our sense of our sin an expression of humility? Of course, we are not to seek honors or praise or special distinctions or special treatment from anyone—just as the Gospel teaches. But if we present ourselves as sinners how can we fall into any of these faults?

What is the most important thing? It is to have the Lord always before our eyes. It is to wish above all to please God. Is God not pleased in a special way by humility? Have you not felt humbled continuously by the failure that follows every effort to depend simply on yourself? Jesus said, "*Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart, and then you will find your rest*". We need not seek to do all the things we have mentioned as though we had the strength for that. We do not. What makes us more humble than this reflection?

The Lord has taught us to be on the lookout for opportunities to be merciful, to be kind, to be compassionate. These are the good works that make us good according to the Lord's teaching. "*If you love me enter through the narrow gate.*" What is this gate if not the small and humble deeds of mercy and kindness and compassion? We don't have to wait for opportunities to show these virtues in great and extraordinary ways.

We should never forget how humble the Lord's ways were in the way he lived and in the gentle things he did to help others. Take this as a pattern for yourself. If you help others pray you are helping yourself pray and becoming like the Lord. And this happens in many other ways as well. One day the things you now have to force yourself to do, and that you do with a reluctant heart, you will find yourself doing willingly. You will have made a habit of invariably doing what is humble and merciful and kind and so of doing what is right. You will have become ever-mindful of the Lord and be a person who is always waiting for him by doing what he commands you.

*Thursday*

## **DO YOU THINK THAT I HAVE COME TO GIVE PEACE ON EARTH? From the Angelus Message of Pope Benedict XVI, 19 August 2007**

While he is on his way to Jerusalem, where death on a cross awaits him, Christ asked his disciples: "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division". And he adds: "[H]enceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Lk 12: 51-53).

Anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of Christ's Gospel knows that it is a message of peace par excellence; as St Paul wrote, Jesus himself "is our peace" (Eph 2: 14), the One who died and rose in order to pull down the wall of enmity and inaugurate the Kingdom of God which is love, joy, and peace.

So how can his words be explained? To what was the Lord referring when he said he had come - according to St Luke's version - to bring "division" or - according to St Matthew's - the "sword" (Mt 10: 34)?

Christ's words mean that the peace he came to bring us is not synonymous with the mere absence of conflicts. On the contrary, Jesus' peace is the result of a constant battle against evil. The fight that Jesus is determined to support is not against human beings or human powers but against Satan, the enemy of God and man.

Anyone who desires to resist this enemy by remaining faithful to God and to good must necessarily confront misunderstandings and sometimes real persecutions.

All, therefore, who intend to follow Jesus and to commit themselves without compromise to the truth, must know that they will encounter opposition and that in spite of themselves, they will become a sign of division between people, even in their own families. In fact, love for one's parents is a holy commandment, but to be lived authentically it can never take precedence over love for God and love for Christ.

Thus, following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, in accordance with St Francis of Assisi's famous words, Christians become "instruments of peace"; not of a peace that is inconsistent and only apparent but one that is real, pursued with courage and tenacity in the daily commitment to overcome evil with good (cf. Rom 12: 21) and paying in person the price that this entails.

The Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, shared until his martyrdom her Son Jesus' fight with the Devil and continues to share in it to the end of time. Let us invoke her motherly intercession so that she may help us always to be witnesses of Christ's peace and never to sink so low as to make compromises with evil.

Friday

## ANTIDOTE TO HYPOCRISY

From the Homily of Pope John Paul II, 25 October 2002

The Gospel passage just proclaimed speaks to us of *two levels of "wisdom"*: the first level consists in the ability to "interpret the countenance of the earth and of the heavens" (Lk 12,56), that is, to grasp the connections between cause and effect in natural phenomena. At another level, a deeper one, we find the ability to judge the "time" in which the history of salvation develops, the time in which God works and awaits the collaboration of the human person. The greatest gift of God must be matched by the greatest responsibility of man.

Christ's criticism of the crowd can be applied to our time, in which humanity has developed a very skillful ability to analyze and interpret phenomena in a certain sense "on the surface", but tends to avoid the deeper questions about ultimate meanings, the meaning of life and death, of the good and evil of history.

The stinging rebuke: "*Hypocrites!*" (Lk 12,56), coming from Jesus' lips, says clearly that it is not so much a question of *not knowing how to judge* what is just (cf. Lk 12,57), but of *not wanting to accept it*. Hypocrisy thus consists of a *false wisdom* that is pleased with so much knowledge but very careful not to be committed to facing weighty questions of a religious and moral nature.

Today's first reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians presents a *wonderful synthesis between faith and life*, between theology and evangelical wisdom: it is the perspective of *unity*. It is nourished by several virtues that the Apostle lists: humility, meekness, patience, and mutual tolerance in love (cf. Eph 4,2). Paul's moral exhortation is entirely based on *contemplation of the mystery* and its *translation in the concrete way of life* of community members.

The antidote to hypocrisy is therefore a *constant circularity* between what is known and what is lived, between the message of truth received as a gift in the Christian vocation and concrete personal and community attitudes. In other words, between *knowledge of the faith* and *holiness of life*.

Dear brothers and sisters, the unity of the ecclesial Body is preserved and built up through the bond of peace in truth and in charity (cf. Eph 4,3). For this reason, it is necessary that your universities should be *places of authentic Christian wisdom*, in which each person is personally committed to creating a coherent synthesis between faith and life, between the content of his studies and his practical behavior.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, always watch over each one of you. May she obtain from the Holy Spirit, an abundance of wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence for you so that, as St Paul says in his Letter to the Ephesians, you may be able to "comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all understanding, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3,18-19).

Saturday

## **LEARNING TO TRUST IN GOD'S MERCY**

### **A Reflection from a Talk by St. Pope John Paul II**

O Mary, Mother of Mercy, watch over all people that the cross of Christ may not be emptied of its power, that our race may not stray from the path of good or become blind to its sin but may put all hope ever more firmly in God who is so rich in mercy. May God carry out the good works prepared from of old so that all may live wholly for God's praise and glory.

Mary is the one who has the deepest knowledge of the mystery of God's mercy. She knows the price that has been paid because her son paid it. She knows her son's compassionate love. We call her our Lady of Mercy and Mother of Divine Mercy. Each title expresses the special gifts given to her for the sake of her vocation, not only in bringing Jesus to birth but as mother of us all. God prepared her entire personality for these roles and so she became able to perceive through the complex of events that were her life, the grace of God to Israel and to every individual human person from generation to generation.

I want to proclaim to you a joy announced by the prophet Isaiah and lived by Mary. It is the joy of God's salvific gift that comes to you through a personal vocation as the unrepeatable expression of God's confidence in you and love for you. Remember that the power of Christ's Paschal Mystery supplies for your weakness and fills your hearts with empowering love.

When we come to communion we come to a renewed commitment. "*Come, follow me!*" is what Christ says to each of us. These words came to Mary through the Angel Gabriel. God enabled Mary to accept his call with all her heart. As one who had obtained mercy in this marvelous way, she becomes the model of mercy given to us through Jesus Christ.

Mercy accompanied her throughout her life, and most especially at the foot of the cross. In that cross, Jesus reveals God's mercy to Mary as she shared in that cross in a special way. Thus, she can bring to us a deeper appreciation of that mercy. Each of us, in each deed done, is an instrument of Divine Mercy shown in love. If that thought accompanies you then grace accompanies you. You too can be filled with grace. Walking in that grace is one of the ways Mary shows forth God's mercy. She shows us how to be bearers of that mercy, day by day and throughout each day until we enter the never-ending day of God's eternity.

Remember that the power of Christ's Paschal Mystery supplies for your weakness and fills your hearts with empowering love. "*Come, follow me!*" says the Lord just as he said it to Mary. Through the grace that filled her, God enabled Mary to accept his call with all her heart. As one who had obtained mercy in a marvelous way, she becomes the model and mother of divine mercy extended to us through her Son, Jesus Christ.