

**FIFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME - A**  
**February 8 – 14, 2026**

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- Sun.  
Feb. 8      **The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**BEING LIGHTS TO THE WORLD**  
A Reflection from a catechesis by St. John Chrysostom
- Mon.  
9            **Monday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
**ON MOVEMENT**  
A Reflection from Everyday Things by Fr. Karl Rahner SJ
- Tues.  
10          **Memorial of St. Scholastica**  
**INSPIRING OTHERS TO LOVE GOD**  
A Reflection in the form of a traditional prayer
- Wed.  
11          **Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes**  
**THE FAITH THAT SAVES & HEALS**  
A Reflection developed from an article on Catholic Online
- Thurs.  
12          **Memorial of Bl. Humbeline**  
**HUMILITY AS THE LAMP STAND FOR GOD'S LIGHT**  
A Reflection developed from an article on Catholic Online
- Fri.  
13          **MONASTIC DESERT DAY**  
**Friday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time**  
**WE START OUR JOURNEY BY SPEAKING CORRECTLY AGAIN**  
From the General Audience of Leo XIV on July 30, 2025
- Sat.  
14          **Memorial of SS. Cyril and Methodius**  
**CHRIST'S LIGHT SHINES THROUGH WORLDLY EVENTS**  
A Reflection developed from an article on Catholic Online

Sunday

## **BEING LIGHTS TO THE WORLD**

### **A Reflection from a catechesis by St. John Chrysostom**

All of us have been clothed in Christ. That means we have been made fit to have Christ dwelling within us. We have divine light dwelling within us. If we choose to do so, we can show others this light, and we can do it without saying a word. This can be done by the strict discipline of our lives. This is what Christ was speaking of when he told us: *“Let your light so shine before all that people may see your good works and praise your Father in Heaven”*.

Notice carefully that Christ's light does not reach the bodily senses. What it does is illuminate the beholder's mind, heart and soul. What it does is rid them of the darkness that evil engenders. Those who encounter this light are invited to accept the light of Christ themselves and then let it shine forth from their lives. Christ is the light that has become our light. He does this by helping us follow his example of virtue.

What Christ wants is that his light, become ours, should shine so brightly that it will illuminate both each believer and those who need special help. Sensible light drives away darkness and enables all who travel to follow a straight course in this sensible world. The spiritual light that shines from blameless conduct illuminates people who can't see clearly how they could live a virtuous life. Their spiritual eyesight had been blurred by error. Christ's light shines through our conduct in a way that purifies the inward vision of all who see us. Henceforth, they too know how to walk in the path of virtue.

Christ wants our virtue, the perfection of our living, and the good works that we do to inspire all who see us and our works to praise our God and our common Master. There is nothing that I think is more important than that we answer this call to be lights. But that means there is nothing more important than striving to live so perfectly like Christ that all who see may praise God and take new courage to walk in his way.

The perfection of a human life is a work of the Spirit. As you let the Spirit fill you and live in and through you, the effect is to open doors for the Spirit in others. You glorify the Lord of all creation. You are made fit to live the life of the Eternal Kingdom. All this is accomplished by the grace, mercy, and goodness of God's Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. If you have experienced Christ in the Spirit working in you, what more could you want than to thank and glorify Him? That is what you are doing now by opening your heart to this instruction I am presenting to you. Don't fail to accept this grace and let it unfold within you as an ever-new openness to showing forth how life is transformed by faith in Christ. You need no promise of reward to motivate you. The experience of living and rejoicing in Christ is its own reward.

*Monday*

## **On Movement from Everyday Things by Fr. Karl Rahner SJ**

Movement is one of the most everyday things in our daily routine. We only think of it when we can't move anymore, when we are shut in or paralysed. Then we suddenly experience being able to move as a grace and a miracle. We are not plants, tied down to just one sitting, determined for us; we search out our setting for ourselves, we change it, we make a choice to move. And we change, we experience ourselves as beings who change ourselves, as searchers, as those who are still on the way. We recognise that we want to move towards a goal, and that we don't want to wander into a mere vacuum. When we are moving forward towards something difficult and unavoidable, we still experience ourselves as free, even if we can only move towards accepting it as something imposed.

We talk about a way of life, and the first description of Christians in the Acts of the Apostles is those "belonging to the Way ". When Scripture tells us that we are not to be hearers of the Word only but also doers, it is thereby saying that we don't just live in the Spirit, but should move in the Spirit. We talk about the course of events, from the good outcome of an undertaking, about the approach to understanding, of how a deceitful person goes behind one's back, of something happening as an occurrence, of a change as a transition, of the end as a passing away. A king or queen ascends to the throne; our life is a pilgrimage; history moves forward; something we undertake, we call accessible; a decision can appear as a step. Both in the sacred and secular spheres, great celebrations are marked by processions and parades.

These few, quite tiny indications are enough to show how we are constantly interpreting our whole life in terms of the utterly basic human experience of everyday movement. We move, and this reminds us already that we have no abiding city, that we are on the way, that our real arrival is ahead of us. We are always seeking our goal, we are pilgrims, wanderers between two worlds, humankind in transition, moved and being moved. As we plan the moves, we discover that we don't always end up where we planned.

The faith of a Christian reveals the goal of this existence is and promises what is to come. God's own self comes in the descent and return of the Lord, who is our future.

We move; we cannot but be seeking. But the Real and the Ultimate is coming to us, and seeking us out- obviously only as we are moving, as we are moving forward. We will be carried along, and that is called grace, by the power of God's movement towards us.

*Tuesday*

## **INSPIRING OTHERS TO LOVE GOD**

### **A Reflection in the form of a traditional prayer**

You have left this world, Scholastica, but you have neither left nor forgotten us. Our souls don't yet have the same spiritual beauty in God's eyes as yours does. Yet we are called to the same Kingdom as you dwell in. It may be that many years have yet to pass before we are fit for the Heavenly abode, where we shall see both God and your glory in God. We ask that your prayers rain down upon us as earthly water did on that night when God forced your brother to spend the night talking about the wonders of the Kingdom still to come. By your prayers, may we obtain a like faith and love, and that we may indeed receive these gifts, obtain for us the grace of repentance.

You sought only such conversation as was about God and eternity in God's Kingdom. Help us to love and seek only that talk which leads to God and to shun all useless and idle chatter. Your heart had mastered the secret of charity toward all, so we ask the grace to let our hearts be softened in the same way to love our neighbors fully. Let all coldness and indifference be banished from our hearts and make us love one another as God would have us love.

You are a Dove of Holy Solitude, Scholastica! You remember the cloister that, like a tree, gave shelter here on earth. All those who live a cloistered life according to the Rule of St. Benedict honor you as a spiritual daughter of St. Benedict. This tree has been filled with vigor, but in our times seems to have withered. Pray that the first vigor of this monastic life be restored. Protection is by the motherly care of your prayers and covering those who seek to live in the way, a shelter from storms, and the blessing of honoring above all the Heavenly Father who calls us to live this life of perfection.

Blessed Scholastica, heaven has received you, and with a joyous welcome like that given to your brother, Benedict. You now live at the very source of that love which fills the holy souls in God's Kingdom. You have gained everything you asked of our Divine Master. Drink of that fount of life to your heart's eternal content and obtain this marvelous grace for us. But don't forget this lower world. For you, as is the case for us, it was a place of trial. But these trials led you to the Heavenly Homeland, and there, like a dove in a cleft in the Holy Rock, your soul abides. Nothing on this earth succeeded in drawing you to pursue it rather than our Heavenly Spouse.

Who was it that gave you such sublime knowledge and made you so wise in love? On that last day of meeting with your brother, the Spirit made you even wiser than he was. It was God who wished to show that a holy and tender charity is dearer to Him than even the most careful fidelity to only human rules. So you and your brother were soon lost in contemplation of Infinite Beauty and in gratitude for Divine Guidance and Providential Care. The Heavenly Lord himself had given you both proof that he would have you neglect all else for the sake of true Heavenly Charity. Creatures could teach you no more about seeking our God above and beyond all other things. He was shortly to take you to himself, O Scholastica. By your prayers, aid us in learning to seek God first and to love God and the work of helping others, long for and find God, and do this above every other human thing. May we learn to honor you in seeking our common Spouse. To God be glory and praise forever! Amen!

*Wednesday*

## **THE FAITH THAT SAVES AND HEALS**

### **A Reflection developed from an article of “Catholic OnLine”**

In the Gospels, Jesus often tells those who have asked him for healing that it is their faith that has saved them and made them well. That faith has often required a fair bit of stubbornness to overcome obstacles coming between them and the Lord. This is the case for Bernadette Soubirous and her role in establishing the shrine to Our Lady of the Rosary at Lourdes.

Bernadette, a sister and a neighbor were out looking for firewood that could be sold in order to buy bread. The families involved were clearly very poor, and the children were able to help support their own families by doing such work. They were near a grotto joined to a kind of spring. The ground was muddy with pools of water. No wonder other wood gatherers hadn't collected all the sticks lying there. Bernadette tells us that she saw our Lady while she was taking off her socks before going through the water and mud to pick up those sticks. As can be seen from a photo taken of her just before the apparition, she seems a serious and very down-to-earth young girl, not the kind of person one would expect to “see things”.

When the story of what had happened got back to the girls' parents, they were spanked and disciplined. They were also told not to go back to that place again. But Bernadette disobeyed. Three days after the original apparition, she went back, this time equipped with holy water to throw at any apparition so that if it were diabolical, it would disappear. But when Bernadette did this, the Lady only smiled and invited Bernadette to pray the rosary. Then the Lady asked her to dig in the muddy ground and, when a spring appeared, she was told to drink some of the water. This became known, and things began to take their course. Those who heard about the apparitions and believed they were from God began to use the water as a faith symbol of God's presence, and some were cured. Some of these turned out to be fakes, but others seemed genuine.

Matters were now beyond Bernadette's control. The civil and Church authorities got involved. The authorities had a water sample analyzed by a chemist who declared it was ordinary water but fit to drink. The Church decided to ignore what was happening and wait to see what came of faith in the curative properties of the spring's water. The grotto was put behind what we would call a police line, and people were forbidden to go to the spring. The order became so controversial that the central government intervened and ordered that people be allowed to do as they would. Eighteen years later, Pope Pius IX approved the devotion and had a statue of Our Lady, which was now at the grotto, crowned as a sign of this.

Bernadette was told by the Lady that she wouldn't be happy in this life but would find never-ending joy in the next. The message was always that people should pray and turn to God in repentance. She last visited the grotto only six months after the first vision of Our Lady. She did continue to trust in God and in the Lady as God's messenger, but didn't make a career of the visions or the miraculous spring. She lived an ordinary life of faith and insisted that is what all were asked to do by the Lady. In short, we are all to turn to God and make prayer a central feature of our relationship with God. Bernadette herself remembered the Lady as very beautiful and as radiating a marvelous light. In effect, that light continued to shine through those who came in faith to Lourdes to seek healing and a transformed life from God and Jesus Christ.

*Thursday*

## **HUMILITY AS THE LAMP STAND FOR GOD'S LIGHT**

### **A Reflection developed from various OnLine sources**

Blessed Humbeline was the youngest sister of St. Bernard. She married and had children, but was unsatisfied with her life as a way of serving God, and so decided to seek counsel from her brother. St. Bernard misjudged the reason for her coming to him and refused to see her until she humbly sent him a message explaining that she had come to ask his advice about her way of best serving God. His advice was that she should obtain her husband's permission to become a nun and so spend the remainder of her life seeking God above all else.

Humbeline had to work for some years before she was able to obtain her husband's permission to leave married life and enter a monastery. She went to Jully, whose abbess was the sister of her husband. She remained there for the rest of her lifetime, though she was later elected abbess, or prioress – the sources don't make it clear how the community at Troyes saw the matter. The sister-in-law went away to found a new monastery, and Humbeline was elected in her place.

She devoted her life to the loving service of her sisters and seems to have been a good and faithful superior. Her monastery lived the Rule of Benedict but was not joined to the new order of Citeaux. As far as we know, St. Bernard and others had nothing but praise for the life of the nuns living under the guidance of Humbeline. She had made the humility with which she responded to her brother's harsh judgment the rule of her life and ministry to her sisters.

We are told that St. Bernard was present at his sister's death and that she told him she was tremendously grateful for his advice that she leave married life and take up instead the monastic life. She had found it a choice filled with joy and inner peace. This, no doubt, is a word for us even more than for St. Bernard. One who lives the monastic life fully, without looking back at what has been left behind, finds it a source of joy and mutual help that leads one to a spiritual fulfillment not found in any other way. That is what Humbeline experienced and what she recommended to many others.

St. Benedict presents humility as a key virtue for those who choose to walk the monastic way toward God. Humbeline gives us an example of a person who wasn't filled with self-concern or self-importance. She was willing to rely on others whom she could see were dedicated first of all to loving God and all the others who choose to seek Him as well.

She knew that Bernard had made this choice and so was fully prepared to hear and follow his advice, as long as that advice was consonant with fulfilling the obligations to God and others she had already undertaken. That her husband eventually gave his permission for her to enter monastic life meant that she had his support and his willingness to give up all the types of support he had received from her throughout their years as husband and wife. She hoped what she did would also lead him to place God even more practically at the center of his life. All of this exemplifies what humility looks like practically. Removing oneself from the center of one's life makes room for God to fill that place. That is what can bring us all to God and to God's light. It makes us ready to live the life of the Kingdom of Heaven. Like Humbeline, we become lampstands from which the light of Christ shines.

Friday

## **WE START OUR JOURNEY BY SPEAKING CORRECTLY AGAIN**

**From the General Audience of Leo XIV on July 30, 2025**

This time in which we live also needs healing. Our world is marked by a climate of violence and hatred that demeans human dignity. We live in a society that is becoming ill due to a kind of "bulimia" of social media connections: we are hyperconnected, bombarded by images, sometimes false or distorted. We are overwhelmed by countless messages that stir within us a storm of contradictory emotions. In this scenario, it is possible that within us arises the desire to turn everything off. We may come to prefer not to feel anything anymore. Even our words risk being misunderstood, and we may be tempted to close ourselves in silence, into a lack of communication where, despite our closeness, we are no longer able to say to one another the most simple and profound things.

In this regard, today I would like to reflect on a passage from the Gospel of Mark that presents us with a man who cannot speak or hear (cf. Mk 7:31–37). Just as it can sometimes happen to us, perhaps this man chose not to speak anymore because he did not feel understood; he chose to shut off every voice because he had been disappointed and wounded by what he had heard. In fact, it is not he who goes to Jesus to be healed, but others bring him. One may think that the people who take him to the Master are concerned about his isolation. The Christian community, however, has also seen in these people an image of the Church, which accompanies each person to Jesus so that they may listen to His word. The episode takes place in pagan territory, so we are in a context where other voices tend to drown out God's voice.

Jesus' behavior may initially seem strange, because He takes this person aside (v. 33a). In this way, He seems to emphasize his isolation, but on closer look, it helps us to understand what lies behind the silence and closure of this man, as if Jesus had perceived his need for intimacy and closeness. Before anything else, Jesus offers him silent closeness, through gestures that speak of a profound encounter: He touches this man's ears and tongue (cf. v. 33b). Jesus does not use many words; He says only what is necessary in that moment: "Be opened!" (v. 34). Mark uses the word in Aramaic—*Eph'phatha*—as though to let us hear, almost "in person" its sound and breath. This simple and beautiful word contains the invitation that Jesus addresses to this man who had stopped listening and speaking. It is as if Jesus were saying to him: "Be open to this world that frightens you! Be opened to the relationships that have disappointed you! Be open to the life you have given up facing!" Closing in on oneself, in fact, is never a solution.

After the encounter with Jesus, that person not only begins to speak again, but he does so "plainly" (v. 35). This adverb, inserted by the Evangelist, seems to suggest something deeper about the reasons for his silence. Perhaps this man had stopped speaking because he felt he was saying things the wrong way, perhaps he felt inadequate. All of us experience what it means to be misunderstood, to feel that we are not truly heard. All of us need to ask the Lord to heal our way of communicating, not only so that we may be more effective, but also so that we may avoid wounding others with our words. To begin speaking correctly again is the start of a journey; it is not yet the destination. In fact, Jesus forbids that man from talking about what has happened to him (cf. v. 36). To truly know Jesus, one must complete a journey; one must remain with Him and also pass through His Passion. When we have seen Him humiliated and suffering, when we have experienced the saving power of His Cross, then we can say that we have truly come to know Him. There are no shortcuts to becoming disciples of Jesus.

*Saturday*

## **CHRIST'S LIGHT SHINES TROUGH WORLDLY EVENTS**

### **A Reflection developed from an article on Catholic Online**

Cyril and Methodius must have often wondered, even as we do today, how God could bring spiritual meaning out of worldly concerns. Every mission they went on, every struggle they fought, was a result of political battles and not spiritual concerns. Yet the political realities have long been forgotten, and the two saints work lives on in the faith and life of Slavic peoples everywhere.

We are told that Methodius and Constantine (who took the name Cyril only when he became a monk) grew up in Thessalonica as members of a prominent Christian family. They were familiar with the Old Slavonic language because many Slavic people had settled in the city. Methodius entered Imperial Service and worked without any special distinction. Constantine studied at the Imperial University in Constantinople but refused a political career and was ordained a priest. He was the official librarian for the Hagia Sophia cathedral and taught philosophy at the Imperial University for some time. He was even sent on an embassy to the court of the Muslim Caliph in order to discuss theology with his scholars.

Meanwhile, Methodius became a monk in Bythina, across the Bosphorus from Constantinople, and shortly, Constantine decided to join him. Four years later, the Patriarch of Constantinople sent them to Russia to strengthen the faith of the Khazar people. Soon afterward, the King of Moravia (modern Czech Republic) asked for Byzantine missionaries because he feared the political influence of Charlemagne's Western Empire. Its authority was spread by Latin-speaking missionaries, and local rulers opposed this.

The two brothers worked hard to build up a Christian community but were accused by Rome and had to go there to defend their work, especially the liturgical use of Old Slavonic. The issue behind the scenes was political, but ecclesiastical issues were raised to conceal this fact. Cyril and Methodius, however, won the support of Pope Nicholas I, and he approved their liturgical practice and ordained them bishops. But Cyril died before they could return to their mission and left Methodius to face the continuing difficulties with Latin missionaries. This went on for the rest of his life, due primarily to the political power issues that shaped the thinking of missionaries from the Western empire.

Keep in mind that all the struggles against Western missionaries were political, and the political infighting used liturgical differences between East and West as so many excuses. The Latin missionaries wanted to bring Eastern Europe into the empire of Charlemagne, while Constantinople and its patriarch opposed this. Indeed, it is thought that Pope Nicholas ordained the two brothers to give him more influence in Eastern Europe, as competing with the Patriarch of Constantinople for influence.

Methodius was given jurisdiction over Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, and Moravian territories. The German bishops' intrigues against him got him imprisoned, and he was only released when German military forces were defeated in Moravia. But to appease the German bishops, the Pope forbade Methodius to use the vernacular (Old Slavonic) in the liturgy. His opponents failed to appreciate how important vernacular liturgy and preaching could be to strengthening a people's faith.

A culture and its language can serve as a kind of lamp stand for the Light of Christ, even while it renews that culture. Political power cannot do this, though missionaries from Germany were very slow to admit it. The Gospel prospered through Methodius' recognition of these facts, and it became an integral part of Slavic culture.