

**NINETEENTH WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME – A &
SOLEMNITY of the ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
August 9 – 15, 2026**

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Fri. 14	MONASTIC DESERT DAY Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr & Priest A MIGHTY EXPLOSION OF LIGHT From a Testimony at the beatification of St. Maximilian Kolbe
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Sunday

LORD, I AM DROWNING, SAVE ME!

From a Commentary by St. Augustine

The gospel tells us how Christ the Lord walked upon the waters of the sea, and how the apostle Peter did the same until fear made him falter and lose confidence. Then he began to sink and emerged from the water only after calling on the Lord with renewed faith.

Now we must regard the sea as a symbol of the present world, and the apostle Peter as a symbol of the one and only Church. For Peter, who ranked first among the apostles and was always the most ready to declare his love for Christ, often acted as a spokesman for them all. For instance, when the Lord Jesus asked who people thought he was and the other disciples had cited various opinions, it was Peter who responded to the Lord's further question, *But who do you say that I am?* With the affirmation: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* One replied for all because all were united.

When we consider Peter as a representative member of the Church, we should distinguish between what was due to God's action in him and what was attributable to himself. Then we ourselves shall not falter; then we shall be founded upon the rock and remain firm and unmoved in the face of the wind, rain, and floods, which are the trials and temptations of this present world. Look at Peter, who in this episode is an image of ourselves; at the moment he is all confidence, at the next all uncertainty and doubt; now he professes faith in the immortal One, now he fears for his life.

Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you upon the water. When the Lord said: *Come* Peter climbed out of the boat and began to walk on the water. This is what he could do through the power of the Lord; what by himself? *Realizing how violently the wind was blowing, he lost his nerve, and as he began to sink, he called out: "Lord, I am drowning, save me.* When he counted on the Lord's help, it enabled him to walk on the water; when human frailty made him falter, he turned once more to the Lord, who immediately stretched out his hand to help him, raised him up as he was sinking, and rebuked him for his lack of faith.

Think, then, of this world as a sea, whipped up to tempestuous heights by violent winds. A person's own private tempest will be his or her unruly desires. If you love God, you will have the power to walk upon the waters, and all the world's swell and turmoil will remain beneath your feet. But if you love the world, it will surely engulf you, for it always devours its lovers, never sustains them. If you feel your foot slipping beneath you, if you become a prey to doubt or realize that you are losing control, if, in a word, you begin to sink, say: *Lord, I am drowning, save me!* Only he who for your sake died in your fallen nature can save you from a death inherent in that fallen nature.

Monday

CONCERNING BURNED LOVE

From the Writings of St. Mechthild

"Ah, dear Lord, have mercy on one who has been consumed here in the fire of your love and has been absorbed in your humility and has been annihilated in all things." God speaks: "My Godhead burned you; My humanity recognized you; My Holy Spirit sanctified you in your poverty..."

Whenever I think of death... my desire reaches back to the time of the martyrs, that I might shed my sinful blood in true Christian faith for the sake of Jesus whom I love. A special gift forces me to dare to state this: that I love God. For whenever vice and suffering come my way, my soul begins to burn in the fire of true love of God with such sweetness that my body floats suspended in divine pleasure. But a sadness remains in my senses, and I pray to God for all who slander me or revile me, that God preserve them from sin...

When I come to die... I shall thank God that I bear the name of Christian and that I came to true Christian faith. And if I were to remain here longer, I would strive to be a help to Holy Christianity that is afflicted with many sins...

An unworthy person pondered in her simplicity God's nobility. And God let her recognize in her senses and see with the eyes of her soul a fire that burned unceasingly in the heights above all things. The fire had been burning without a beginning and shall keep on burning without end. This fire is God eternal, who holds within himself eternal life and from whom all things have come forth. The sparks of the fire that have shot forth are the holy angels. The bright flickerings of the fire are all the saints of God... The ever-glowing coals of the fire are all the blessed here on earth who are on fire with heavenly love and shine with good example. All those who have grown cold in sin can warm themselves on the coals...

The smoke of the fire is all earthly things that one often makes use of with improper pleasure. How beautifully they shine in our eyes. How wantonly they play in our hearts. And yet they bear hidden within them a great amount of bitterness, for they disappear like smoke and blind the best. They make even the holiest persons bleary-eyed.

The comfort of the fire is the delightful pleasure that our soul receives inwardly from God through the warmth of the divine fire, so sacred that we, on fire, reflect back toward the heavenly fire, and we persevere in virtue so that we are not extinguished. The bitterness of the fire is the word that God shall speak on the last day: "Go from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!" The radiance of the fire is the gleaming sight of the divine countenance of the Holy Trinity that shall flood our body and soul with light, so that we shall see and know there the marvelous bliss that here we cannot even name. These things have come out of this fire and flow back into it, each according to God's disposition, in eternal praise.

Tuesday

THE TESTAMENT OF SAINT CLARE

From "The Life and Writing of St. Clare of Assisi"

Among the many graces which we have received and continue daily to receive from the liberality of the Father of mercies, and for which we must give deepest thanks to our glorious *God*, our vocation holds first place. Indeed, because it is the more perfect and the greater among these graces, so much the more does it claim our gratitude. Therefore the Apostle says: "Know your vocation".

The Son of God became for us the Way; and that Way our Blessed Father Francis, His true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example. For when the Saint as yet had neither Friars nor companions and, shortly after his conversion, was repairing the Church of San Damiano and there, filled completely with divine consolation, was led to abandon the world wholly and forever, in great joy and in the illumination of the Holy Spirit he prophesied concerning us what the Lord later fulfilled. For at that time he mounted the wall of the church and cried with a loud voice... "Come and help me in building the Monastery of San Damiano; for here will dwell Ladies whose good name and holy life will glorify our Heavenly Father throughout His holy Church."

In this therefore we can behold the great kindness of God toward us, who of the abundance of His mercy and love deigned to speak thus through His Saint of our vocation and election. And it was not of us alone that our most blessed Father prophesied these things, but of all others likewise who were to enter the holy calling to which God has called us. With what solicitude, therefore, and fervor of mind and body must we not observe the commandments of God and of our Father, that with the help of God we may return to Him with increase the talent He has given us! For the Lord has placed us as an example and mirror not only for other men, *but* also for our Sisters whom God has called to our way of life, that they in turn should be a mirror and an example to those living in the world.

Since therefore the Lord has called us to such heights of holiness that in us our other Sisters may behold themselves who are to be an example to mankind, we are truly bound to bless the Lord and praise Him and to be strengthened in Him more and more to do good. Wherefore if we live according to the pattern given us, we shall leave others a noble example and after life's short labor gain the prize of eternal happiness.

After the Most High celestial Father had deigned to enlighten *my* heart by His mercy and grace to do penance after the example and teaching of our most Blessed Father Francis... I voluntarily promised him obedience with the few Sisters whom the Lord had given me... And thus by the will of God and of our most blessed Father Francis we came to dwell at the church of San Damiano. There in a short time the Lord by His mercy *and* grace increased our number that what He had prophesied through His Saint might come to pass...

For this reason I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that through the prayers and merits of the glorious and holy Virgin Mary, His Mother, and of our most blessed Father Francis and all the Saints, the Lord Himself who has given us a good beginning will give also the increase, and likewise constant perseverance to the end.

Wednesday

LET US BE CONCERNED FOR EACH OTHER

An excerpt from the Lenten message of Pope Benedict XVI (2012)

Today, the Lord's voice summons all of us to be concerned for one another. Even today God asks us to be "guardians" of our brothers and sisters (Gen 4:9), to establish relationships based on mutual consideration and attentiveness to the *well-being*, the *integral* well-being of others. The great commandment of love for one another demands that we acknowledge our responsibility towards those who, like ourselves, are creatures and children of God. Being brothers and sisters in humanity and, in many cases, also in the faith, should help us to recognize in others a true *alter ego*, infinitely loved by the Lord. If we cultivate this way of seeing others as our brothers and sisters, solidarity, justice, mercy and compassion will naturally well up in our hearts.

"Being concerned for each other" also entails being concerned for their spiritual well-being. Here I would like to mention an aspect of the Christian life, which I believe has been quite forgotten: *fraternal correction in view of eternal salvation*. Today, in general, we are very sensitive to the idea of charity and caring about the physical and material well-being of others, but almost completely silent about our spiritual responsibility towards our brothers and sisters. This was not the case in the early Church or in those communities that are truly mature in faith, those which are concerned not only for the physical health of their brothers and sisters, but also for their spiritual health and ultimate destiny. The Scriptures tell us: "Rebuke the wise and he will love you for it. Be open with the wise, he grows wiser still, teach the upright, he will gain yet more" (Prov 9:8ff). Christ himself commands us to admonish a brother who is committing a sin (cf. Mt 18:15). The verb used to express fraternal correction - *elenchein* - is the same used to indicate the prophetic mission of Christians to speak out against a generation indulging in evil (cf. Eph 5:11).

The Church's tradition has included "admonishing sinners" among the spiritual works of mercy. It is important to recover this dimension of Christian charity. We must not remain silent before evil. I am thinking of all those Christians who, out of human regard or purely personal convenience, adapt to the prevailing mentality, rather than warning their brothers and sisters against ways of thinking and acting that are contrary to the truth and that do not follow the path of goodness. Christian admonishment, for its part, is never motivated by a spirit of accusation or recrimination. It is always moved by love and mercy, and springs from genuine concern for the good of the other. As the Apostle Paul says: "If one of you is caught doing something wrong, those of you who are spiritual should set that person right in a spirit of gentleness; and watch yourselves that you are not put to the test in the same way" (Gal 6:1).

In a world pervaded by individualism, it is essential to rediscover the importance of fraternal correction, so that together we may journey towards holiness. Scripture tells us that even "the upright falls seven times" (Prov 24:16); all of us are weak and imperfect (cf. 1 Jn 1:8). It is a great service, then, to help others and allow them to help us, so that we can be open to the whole truth about ourselves, improve our lives and walk more uprightly in the Lord's ways. There will always be a need for a gaze which loves and admonishes, which knows and understands, which discerns and forgives (cf. Lk 22:61), as God has done and continues to do with each of us.

Thursday

THE LAST STAGE OF LOVE

From “Purgation and Purgatory” by St. Catherine of Genoa

In its creation, the soul was endowed with all the means necessary for coming to its perfection, for living as it ought to, for not contaminating itself by sin. Once sullied by sin, original and actual, it loses those gifts and dies. It can be brought back to life only by God. The inclination to evil still remains in the soul revived by Baptism, and unless it is strenuously fought leads back to death.

Afterwards, God revivifies the soul with a special grace of His. In no other way could the soul renounce its self-centeredness or return to the pristine state of its creation; and as the soul makes its way to its first state, its ardor in transforming itself into God is its purgatory, the passionate instinct to overcome its impediments. The last stage of love is that which comes about and does its work without man's doing. If man were to be aware of the many hidden flaws in him, he would despair. These flaws are burned away in the last stage of love. God then shows that weakness to man, so that the soul might see the workings of God, of that flaming love.

Things man considers perfect leave much to be desired in the eyes of God, for all the things of man that are perfect in appearance – what he seeks, feels, knows – contaminate him. If we are to become perfect, the change must be brought about in us and without us; that is, the change is to be the work not of man but of God. This, the last stage of love, is the pure and intense love of God alone. In this transformation, the action of God in penetrating the soul is so fierce that it seems to set the body on fire and to keep it burning until death. The overwhelming love of God gives it a joy beyond words.

Yet this joy does not do away with one bit of pain in the suffering of the souls in purgatory. As the soul grows in its perfection, so does it suffer more because of what impedes the final consummation, the end for which God made it; so that in purgatory great joy and great suffering do not exclude one another. If contrition could purge it, the soul would turn to it in an instant and forthwith pay its debt; and it would do so impetuously, since it has a clear appreciation of the meaning of that impediment in its way.

The soul, for its part, no longer has a choice of its own. It can seek only what God wills, nor would it want otherwise; and that too is in keeping with God's decree. And if the living were to offer alms for the benefit of the souls in purgatory, to shorten the assigned time of their purgation, still those souls could not turn with affection to watch, but would leave all things to God, who is paid as He wishes. If those souls could, in gratitude, turn their attention, that would be a self-seeking act that would distract them from the contemplation of the divine will – and that distraction would be hell. The souls in purgatory attend to all that God gives them, in joy and suffering; nor can they have any further concern for the lesser self since they have been radically transformed by the will of God.

What He wills for them is what gives them joy. Were a soul to appear in the presence of God with one hour of purgation still due, that would be to do it great harm. It would then suffer more than if it were cast into ten purgatories, for it could not endure the justice and pure goodness of God, nor would it be fitting on the part of God. That soul, aware that complete satisfaction was not as yet fully rendered to God, even if the time lacking were but the twinkling of an eye, would prefer to submit to a thousand hells rather than so appear in God's presence.

Friday

A MIGHTY EXPLOSION OF LIGHT

From a Testimony at the beatification of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Fr. Kolbe and I worked together in May or June 1941. We were bringing sand up from the Sola River. This was some of Auschwitz's heaviest work, so our squad had a very hard time indeed. The work itself was very painful; we were lightly and very insufficiently dressed, and yet we had to wade into the cold water to dig the sand. In addition, the guards beat us cruelly or sometimes killed prisoners outright. From the first time I saw Father Maximilian, I was struck by his dignity and calm, so different from others. Despite the terrible conditions and bad treatment, he never complained nor did he curse. Instead, he tried to comfort the other prisoners and lift our spirits. During the three weeks we worked together, I sometimes saw the guards beat Father Kolbe with a big stick. Each time, Father Kolbe took it without a murmur.

The news of his death was an enormous shock to the whole camp. We became aware that someone among us in this spiritual night of the soul was raising the standard of love on high. Someone unknown, like everyone else, tortured and bereft of name and social standing, went to a horrible death for the sake of someone not even related to him. Therefore it is not true, we cried, that humanity is cast down and trampled in the mud, overcome by oppressors, and overwhelmed by hopelessness. Thousands of prisoners were convinced the true world continued to exist and that our torturers would not be able to destroy it.

More than one individual began to look within himself for this real world, found it, and shared it with his camp companion, strengthening both in this encounter with evil. To say that Father Kolbe died for one of us or for that person's family is too great a simplification. His death was the salvation of thousands. And on this, I would say, rests the greatness of that death. That's how we felt about it. And as long as we live, we who were at Auschwitz will bow our heads in memory of it as at that time we bowed our heads before the bunker of death by starvation. That was a shock full of optimism, regenerating and giving strength; we were stunned by his act, which became for us a mighty explosion of light...

Saturday

SHE FOUND HIM WHOM HER SOUL LOVES

From a Sermon by St. Aelred of Rievaulx

Among all those who are Christ's, she who tastes his goodness more intimately and more delicately is of greater excellence, more blessed, and more attractive. She is to him not only a creature, a handmaid, a friend, and a daughter, but also a mother. So then it is only right that we welcome her feast with greater delight and gladness. But today even more we should rejoice with her because today her joy was completely fulfilled. Great was her joy when the angel greeted her. Great was her joy when she felt the coming of the Holy Spirit, when that marvelous fusion of the Son of God with her flesh took place in her womb, so that he, one and the same, was the Son of God and her Son. Great was her joy when she held such a Son in her arms, when she listened to his words, when she saw his miracles. And because her sorrow was so great at the Passion, she took wondrous joy again in his resurrection and greater still at his ascension. But all these joys were surpassed by the joy which she receives today.

Up to this day, brothers, Mary, the blessed Mother of God, knew her dearest Son in the flesh. Although she fastened all her desires and all her love there, where he was, after her dearest Son and Lord ascended into heaven, so long as she remained in this corruptible flesh, what she had seen of him in the flesh could not fade from her memory. For his deeds and words were always coming to her mind, and above all there lingered in her heart, the features of his exquisite face. Today, however, she passed from this world and went up to the heavenly kingdom. There she began to contemplate his brightness, power, and divinity, and her joy and her longing were fulfilled. So with good reason could she say: "I have found him whom my soul loves". She holds him, and she does not let him go... Today the Blessed Virgin... entered that heavenly court. She saw the white robes of the virgins, the ruddy crowns of the martyrs, the thrones of the apostles, and in the midst of them she found her Son reigning. Ascending higher than the very highest of the saints, she has arrived at such knowledge of the divinity that she then glories in having found him for the first time.

O blessed soul, who left behind not only the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, but also the angels... and all heaven's array, and so reached her dearest Son. Then she utterly found him whom now her soul loves utterly. She found him, and she held him. She holds him in the embraces of an utterly perfect love, and she can never lose him because she can never love him any less.

Let us lift up our hearts therefore, brothers, to Our Lady, our Advocate. Let us reflect on how much hope we have in her. Just as she surpasses every creature in excellence, so also she is more merciful and kinder than any creature. Let us then confidently entreat her, who can by her excellence assist us and by her mercy chooses to do so, that she may implore her Son for us so that as he deigned to be born of her for us, he may through her deign to have mercy on us.