

TWENTY-SEVENTH WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME – A

October 4 – 10, 2026

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- Sun
Oct. 4 **Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time**
THE VINE AND THE VINEDRESSER
From a commentary by St. Basil the Great
- Mon.
5 **Memorial of Bl. Francis Xavier Seelos, Priest**
PLACE NOTHING AHEAD OF GOD'S LOVE
From the letters of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Priest
- Tues
6 **Memorial of St. Bruno, Priest and Hermit**
THE CARTHUSIAN STATUTES
Excerpts from The Carthusian Rule of Life and the Writings of St. Bruno, etc.
- Wed.
7 **Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary**
THE ROSARY IS NOT A ROAD, BUT A PLACE
From the writings of Fr. Romano Guardini
- Thurs
8 **Memorial of the Dead**
THE INVISIBLE CHURCH
An Excerpt from The Paradise of the Heart by John Comenius
- Fri.
9 **MONASTIC DESERT DAY**
Friday of the 27th Week of Ordinary Time
ON HUMILITY
From a Discourse by Dorotheos of Gaza
- Sat.
10 **Saturday of the 27th Week of Ordinary Time**
THE BOND THAT KEEPS GOD'S FAMILY TOGETHER
A Reflection by Fr. Charles de Foucauld

Sunday

THE VINE AND THE VINEDRESSER

From a commentary by St. Basil the Great

You need only look at the vine to be reminded of your own nature, that is, if you observe it intelligently. No doubt you remember the image used by the Lord in which he says that he is the vine and the Father the vinedresser. Each of us who has been grafted onto the Church by faith, he calls branches, and he urges us to bear much fruit so as not to be rejected as useless and thrown into the fire.

Throughout the Scriptures the Lord continually likens human souls to vines. He says, for instance, *My beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hillside*; and again: *I planted a vineyard and put a hedge around it*. Clearly it is human souls that he calls his vineyard, and the hedge he has put round them is the security of his commandments and the protection of the angels; for *the angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him*. Moreover, by establishing in the Church apostles in the first place, prophets in the second, and teachers in the third, he has surrounded us as though by a firmly planted palisade.

In addition, the Lord has raised our thoughts to heaven by the examples of saints of past ages. He has kept them from sinking to the earth where they would deserve to be trampled on, and he wills that the bonds of love, like the tendrils of a vine, should attach us to our neighbors and make us rest on them, so that always climbing upward like the vines growing on trees, we may reach the loftiest heights.

He also requires that we allow ourselves to be weeded. To be spiritually weeded means to have renounced worldly ambitions that burdened our hearts. Anyone who has renounced the love of material things and attachment to possessions, or who has come to regard as despicable and deserving of contempt the poor, wretched glory of this world, is like a weeded vine. Freed from the profitless burden of earthly aspirations, that person can breathe again.

Finally, following out the implications of the comparison, we must not run to wood, or, in other words, show off or seek the praise of outsiders. Instead, we must bear fruit by reserving the display of our good works for the true vine dresser.

Monday

PLACE NOTHING AHEAD OF GOD'S LOVE

From the letters of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Priest

This desire to bring a sacrifice to God again and again extends to everything that I ever loved in this life, and upon which my heart was set.

When I think of the beauties of nature, these do not stir up longing and melancholy, but I am filled with the greatest joy, because, since I am not giving God any real and true gifts, I can give him imagined and pretended ones. At the same time, in the overflowing of my good fortune, I cannot at all get away from the thought that in heaven God will give me those that, for him, I have forsaken in the world, and for this I also constantly pray.

And so, the novitiate and its completion, the taking of vows, the life with confreres of the Order, and above all, the insight to cherish these goods to the best of my ability, so that there is nothing left for me to desire, except to fulfill my duties better – these were the first blessings of divine mercy.

Everything was completely against my nature. But precisely the joyful acceptance of them, in God's boundless grace, made so clear to me the mystery of renunciation and patience in this world that I feel that I am much too fortunate in the possession of my religious confreres and all the spiritual and temporal blessings that are bound together with it. And what is still more, that God has exalted me so high as to announce the Gospel to the poor, and to teach, and share with them his treasures.

Every offering has value only insofar as one snatches it away from one's own benefit and dedicates it to God through this self-conquest. One loves and gives precisely because one loves, and because one considers what is given as a good, as a treasure. Love of creatures must be subordinated to the love of God, whom one is pledged to love above all things.

Time, in which we have found nothing to offer up to God, is lost for eternity. If it is only the duties of our vocation that we fulfill with dedication to the will of God; if it is the sweat of our faces that, in resignation, we wipe from our brow without murmuring; if it is suffering, temptations, difficulties with our fellowmen – everything we can present to God as an offering and can, through them, become like Jesus his Son. Where the sacrifice is great and manifold, there, in the same proportion, is the hope of glory more deeply and more securely grounded in the heart of him who makes it.

Tuesday

THE CARTHUSIAN STATUTES

Excerpts from The Carthusian Rule of Life and the Writings of St. Bruno, etc.

Master Bruno and six companions entered the desert of Chartreuse in the year of our Lord 1084 and settled there; under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they and their successors, learning from experience, gradually evolved a special form of hermit life, which was handed on to succeeding generations, not by the written word, but by example...

The more sublime the path that opens before us in the holy way of life handed down to us by our Fathers, the more easily can we fall away from it; not only by obvious transgressions, but also by the drag innate, as it were, in routine. Since, however, God gives his grace to the humble, let us have recourse to him above all and stand fast in the combat, lest the chosen vineyard fall into ruin.

For the continuing quality of our life will depend more on the fidelity of each individual than on the multiplication of laws, or the updating of customs, or even the zeal of Priors. It is not, indeed, enough to obey the commands of our superiors and observe the letter of the Statutes faithfully, unless, led by the Spirit, we savor the things of the Spirit... Now no longer a child, but a man, let him not be tossed to and fro and carried about with every new wind, but rather let him try to find out what would please God and do it of his own free will, enjoying with sober wisdom that liberty of God's children, concerning which he will have to render an account before God. Let no one, however, be wise in his own eyes; for it is to be feared that he who neglects to open his heart to an enlightened guide will lose the quality of discretion and go less quickly than is necessary, or too fast and grow weary, or stop on the way and... fall asleep... In simplicity of heart, then, and in purity of mind let us strive with all our power to fix our thoughts and affections continually on God. Let each be forgetful of self and what lies behind, and press on towards the goal to win the prize which is God's call to the life above, in Christ Jesus.

"But he who has no love for the brother he has seen, what love can he have for the God he has not seen?" And since brotherly fellowship between men can never be perfect unless based on mutual esteem, it is certainly fitting in the highest degree that we, who live in the house of God, should bear witness to the love that comes from God by lovingly welcoming our brothers with whom we live, and by making a real effort to understand with heart and mind their characters and temperaments, however different from our own. For the source of hostilities, disagreements, and the like, often lies in contempt of others. Let us carefully avoid anything that could injure the blessing of peace...

Finally, in these times, we must be extremely careful not to model ourselves on the behavior of the world around us. For, too eagerly to seek and too readily to accept the comforts of modern life is altogether opposed to our state of life; especially as novelty always calls for more novelty. The resources granted us by divine Providence are not given that we may seek the good things of life; indeed, if the way to God is easy, it is because it is traveled not by loading ourselves with burdens, but by getting rid of them. Let us then free ourselves from possessions to the point that, having given up everything and having left even self behind, we may share in the way of life of our first Fathers.

Wednesday

THE ROSARY IS NOT A ROAD, BUT A PLACE

From the writings of Fr. Romano Guardini

To linger in the domain of Mary is something divinely great. One does not ask about the utility of truly noble things, because they have their meaning within themselves. So it is of infinite meaning to draw a deep breath of this purity, to be secure in the peace of this union with God.

With this we come back to what was said in the beginning. We need a place of holy tranquility that is pervaded by the breath of God and where we meet the great figures of the faith. This place is really the inaccessibility of God himself, which is opened to us only through Christ. All prayer begins when we become silent, when we recollect our scattered thoughts and feel remorse at our trespasses, when we direct our thoughts toward God. If we do all this, the place is thrown open, not only as a domain of spiritual tranquility and mental concentration, but as something that comes from God.

We are always in need of this place, especially when the convulsions of the times make clear something that has always existed but which is sometimes hidden by outward well-being and a prevailing "peace of mind": namely, the homelessness of our lives. In such times, a great courage is demanded from us: not only a readiness to dispense with more and to accomplish more than usual, but to persevere in a vacuum we do not otherwise notice. So, we require more than ever this place of which we speak, not to creep into to hide, but as a place to find the core of things, to become calm and confident once more. For this reason the Rosary is so important in times like ours -- assuming, of course, that all slackness and exaggeration are done away with, and it is used in its clear and original forcefulness. This is all the more important because the Rosary does not require any special preparation. We do not need to generate thoughts of which we are not capable at the moment or at any other time. We step into a well-ordered world, meet familiar images and find roads that lead us to the essential.

The Rosary has the character of a sojourn. Its essence is the sheltering security of a quiet, holy world that envelops the person who is praying. This is particularly evident when we compare it with the Stations of the Cross, which have the character of a journey. We follow the Master from one "station" to another, and feel at the end that we have reached our goal. The Rosary is not a road, but a place, and it has no goal but depth. To linger in it has great compensations.

Thursday

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH

An Excerpt from The Paradise of the Heart by John Comenius

A still greater light began to shine around me... He who spoke to me, my Lord... said, "I live in two places, in my glory in heaven and in the penitent heart on earth. So from this time forward, I want you also to have two dwellings: one here at home, where I have promised to dwell with you; the other with me in heaven... Whenever you wish, you will be able to raise yourself up to me so that we may experience delight in one another." ... Go, then," he said, "and return to the place you passed over earlier..."

Remembering where it was that I went astray, I arose and hurried back eagerly. Although surrounded by the turmoil of the world, I paid no attention to it. Entering the temple called Christianity and seeing in its innermost part, which is the choir, a curtain or screen, I went directly toward it, not even looking at the factions quarreling on the sides... The curtain had two parts. The exterior, which could be seen from the outside, was dark-colored and was called... 'contempt of the world.' The interior was brilliant and was called... the 'love of Christ.'...

Still standing outside and observing, I saw something strange and amazing taking place. Although many thousands of people were constantly walking around the enclosure, they did not enter it. I do not know whether they simply did not notice it or whether it seemed unattractive to them from the outside. I saw those learned in the Scriptures, as well as priests, bishops, and many others who pretended to be holy. This made me sad. I saw that when someone stepped closer, a ray of light flashed through a crevice or a fragrance wafted out and attracted him, so that he wanted to find its source. The brilliance of the world dazzled them once more, and they went away again.

When I approached the door of the enclosure, however, I saw the real reason why so few people arrived there; namely, because of the very rigorous examination that was held there. Those who wished to enter had to surrender all their possessions, and even their eyes, ears, minds, and hearts; for, they said, whoever wants to be wise in God's sight must become simple in his own; whoever wishes to know God must forget all else; whoever wants to possess God must forsake all else.

Having observed this at the door, I went further beyond the screen to look at these things... With unspeakable delight, I observed that everything here was in opposition to the world. In the world I had seen blindness and darkness everywhere, but here bright light; in the world deception, here truth; the world was full of disorder, here was marvelous order; in the world was striving, here peace... For although upon entering, Christians must lay aside and relinquish reason, yet it is returned to them again by the Holy Spirit, refined and polished. Thus, they are as if full of eyes; wherever they go in the world, whatever they see, hear, smell, or taste above them, below them, or around them, they see everywhere the footprints of God and know well how to turn everything into the fear of God. Therefore, they are wiser than all philosophers of the world, whom God blinds by his righteous judgment so that while supposing they know everything, they know nothing... Their learning is fixed only on the outer shell, that is, a survey of the exterior; it does not penetrate to the inner kernel where God's glory pervades all. But in everything that he sees, hears, touches, smells, or tastes, a Christian sees, hears, touches, smells, and tastes God, having the certainty within that this is not mere supposition but the real truth.

Friday

ON HUMILITY

From a Discourse by Dorotheos of Gaza

ONE OF THE FATHERS used to say, 'Before anything else, we need humility: being ready to listen whenever a word is spoken to us, and to say, "I submit", because through humility every device of the enemy, every kind of obstacle, is destroyed.' What is the force of this saying? Why did he say, 'before anything else we need humility', and not, 'we need self-control'? Because the Apostle says, 'Everyone who strives for mastery abstains from all things.' Or why did he not say, 'Before anything else we need the fear of God'? For it is written, 'The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord' and again, 'With the fear of the Lord a man turns away from evil.' Or why did he not say, 'Before all else we need almsgiving, or faith'? For it is said that by faith and almsgiving we are cleansed from sin, and the Apostle says, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' If, therefore, it is impossible to please God without faith, and faith and almsgiving cleanse from sin, and by fear a man turns aside from evil, and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and a man who strives for the mastery abstains from all things, why does he say, 'Before all else we need humility' and leaves aside all these very necessary things? The holy man wishes to show us that neither the fear of God, nor faith, nor self-control, nor any one of the other virtues can set us right without humility, and therefore he says, 'Before anything else we need humility, being ready to listen whenever a word is said to us, and to say, "I submit", because through humility every device of the enemy and every kind of obstacle is destroyed.'

Consider well, brothers, how great is the power of humility. Consider how great is the spiritual energy behind saying, 'Pardon me'. Why is the devil called not only 'enemy', but also 'adversary'? He is called 'enemy' because he is a hater of men, one who hates what is good, a traitor; an 'adversary', because he always puts obstacles in the way of good. If someone wants to pray, he puts obstacles in the way through evil suspicions, shameful thoughts, and spiritual torpor. If a man wants to give alms, he obstructs it through avarice or procrastination. If a man wants to keep vigil, he obstructs it with hesitations or laziness. In every single thing he is against us when we desire to do good. This is why he is called the enemy and the adversary and why, by lowliness, all his attacks and devices are brought to nothing. Lowliness is really a great thing, for every kind of good is advanced by lowliness, and by working at it we cut short our journey, as it says, 'See my humility and my toil, and take away all my sins,' and 'I was humiliated, and the Lord saved me!' For humility *alone* can bring us into the spiritual life... even if slowly.

Therefore, let us also be humble for a short time, and we shall be saved. Even if we cannot endure much labor because we are weak, let us be set on humbling ourselves. I firmly believe that, in the mercy of God, the little thing done with humility will enable us to be found there, in the same place as the saints who have labored much and been true servants of God... We are very weak, and cannot labor very much, but can we not at least be humble? Happy indeed, brothers, is the one who has true humility. A great thing is humility; rightly was it pointed out by that holy man who had true humility and who said, 'Humility does not grow angry, and does not anger anyone.'... May God, who is so good, grant us the grace of humility which delivers man from so many evils and delivers him from the greatest temptations.

Saturday

THE BOND THAT KEEPS GOD'S FAMILY TOGETHER

A Reflection by Fr. Charles de Foucauld

What does our God ask of us who are one with him in a mystical marriage? Love your enemies, God says. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who wish to harm you. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, offer the other cheek to be struck as well. If anyone wants to take your outer garment, let him have your other clothes. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone takes something from you, don't ask to have it back. Do to others all that you would have others do to you. Forgive, and you will be forgiven by God. Don't be concerned about the speck of dust in another's eye but look at the blocks to your own ability to see clearly.

All these commands have to do with charity. There is nothing difficult to understand about any of them once you realize, finally, that all human persons are, taken together, members of a single family with God, the Creator and Guide, as a sort of father. God is our Heavenly Father but in such a way that God loves all and loves each incomparably more and more tenderly than any human parents can love each of their children.

Since our God loves each of us in just this way, and loves all and each without any exception, God wishes to see among us that same love and tenderness, and when it is needed, that same leniency and yielding gentleness that loving parents always long to see among their own children. God would have you give in to one another, helping one another without stint. Each of us should yield where our own rights are concerned, and no one of us should insist on one's rights. Let one who is wrong or unfair have his or her way. The hope of correcting such a person lies in gentleness and keeping peace. We simply pray for the erring person that the mistake may be seen and corrected.

You can see from my recommendations about mutual love that I have only one purpose in mind. I want to keep peace with all my brothers and sisters in God's one human family. If we all observe these precepts, the principle from which they flow will be engraved deeply on us and within us. All are, in truth and in fact, brothers and sisters in God. God is our parent, and God wishes all of us to regard and to love one another, and treat one another in every way and at every moment, like persons we love most tenderly.

Be compassionate with one another. Think of Jesus' compassion for you. How did he suffer with all sufferings and pity all those who suffer! For you and me he suffered, and he asks us to suffer with those who mourn, with the sick, with the anxious, with the hungry, with the weak, with the ignorant. He not only did good to others while he was on earth, but he opened his Sacred Heart to them, and does so for us even today. Compassion is part of the love that lives in every heart; it is part of all human love. In Christ we can find new strength for compassion and for every dimension of genuine love. That is what Jesus offers us every day, always. What else can bind us together and make us one in truth and not just in words or wishes?