

2014 Aug 1 Fri: Alphonsus Liguori, bp, rf, dr M
Jer 26: 1-9/ Ps 69: 5. 8-10. 14/ Mt 13: 54-58

For some verbal correction seems to be useless. I remember of a senior student who did not pay any attention in spite of several warnings given to him. When a stronger action was taken, he came and apologized.

The same story was running through the history of the life of the people of Israel. From time to time God sent his prophets to tell his people to mend their way of living. A warning was always given that if they did not change, God would punish them, yet they paid no heed. Instead they made a plot to get rid of them. When truth confronts it always hurts. It was at that state God punished them.

The case was not only with the prophets. When the Messiah, whom for so long they waited, finally came, they despised him and even his own kindred did not recognize him. Prejudice clouded their hearts and minds. However, Jesus responded mercifully to their resistance when he was hung on the cross: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

A story was told of a man who was judged by God in heaven. Being a notorious criminal he was condemned to hell. The man repentantly turned to the right side and looked at Jesus. Jesus turned to his Father and said, "His sins are forgiven by my death on the cross." Lucky are we who have Jesus as our savior. We are saved from the wrath of the loving Father

2014 Aug 2 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM/ Eusebius of Vercelli, bp/ Peter Julian Eymard, p
Jer 26: 11-16. 24/ Ps 69: 15-16. 30-31. 33-34/ Mt 14: 1-12

Today, our liturgy proposes us to contemplate an injustice: the beheading of St. John the Baptist; and, at the same time, to discover in God's Word the need of a clear and concrete testimony of our faith to fill out the world with hope.

I invite you to centre our consideration in the person of Herod, the tetrarch. In fact, it is a counter-testimony for us, but it will help us to emphasize some interesting aspects, important enough for our testimony of faith amid the world. 'The news about Jesus reached King Herod' (Mt 14:1). This assertion underlines an apparently correct, but not too sincere, attitude. It is the same kind of reality we can today find in many persons and, perhaps, even in ourselves. There

are many who have heard of Jesus, but, who is He actually? what kind of personal implication can we find in him?

First of all, we must give the correct answer; Herod's reply is but vague information: This man is John the Baptist. John has risen from the dead (Mt 14:2). Most probably you will be missing here Peter's reply to Jesus' question: 'He said to them, 'but who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt 16:15-16). And this assertion does not leave any room for fear or indifference but it rather gives way to a testimony based in the Gospel of hope. This is how His Holiness John Paul II defined it in his apostolic Exhortation The Church in Europe: 'Therefore, in union with the whole Church, I invite my brothers and my sisters in faith constantly to be open in trust to Christ and to allow themselves to be renewed by him, proclaiming to all people of good will in the power of peace and love that whoever encounters the Lord comes to know the Truth, discovers the Life, and finds the Way leading to it'.

Today, Saturday, let the Mother of God, the Mother of hope, help us to really discover Jesus and to bear witness of him to our brethren.

2014 Aug 3 SUN: EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is 55: 1-3/ Ps 145: 8-9. 15-16. 17-18/ Rom 8: 35. 37-39/ Mt 14: 13-21

Through the first reading prophet Isaiah gives a message of hope to all of us. The message is that when God gives He gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves in order to share with others especially with those who are less fortunate than us who are in need of our help.

St. Paul tells us in the second reading that God's compassion showed the depth of His love and concern for all who are truly needy and that God's love made visible through Jesus Christ. He is ever ready to those who earnestly seek him out.

The people gathered around Jesus attracted by the power of his words. They were following Jesus to listen to the sweet words that he spoke. They waited to be consoled by a look from Him. They waited patiently for hours listen to his words. They were thirsty and hungry. But they believed that listening to Jesus was more important than their thirst and hunger.

Jesus was thoughtful of the people. He was thinking how to feed this people. So he performed the miracle of feeding them with the help of the five loaves and two fish that a boy had. Today even in our lives this miracle multiplication takes place regularly. However limited our talents and abilities are, when we are helped by the power of Jesus there takes

great miracle. Our limited talents are made powerful and precious by the power of Jesus. God takes the little that we have and multiplies it for others.

We are invited to surrender our abilities, talents, deeds and thoughts in the hands of God so that God can empower more. We will be given much more than we surrender or place before God in the service of His people.

2014 Aug 4 Mon: John Mary Vianney, p M

Jer 28: 1-17/ Ps 119: 29. 43. 79. 80. 95. 102/ Mt 14: 22-36

Albert Einstein's wife was once asked if she understood her husband's theory of relativity. "No" she replied loyally, "but I know my husband and I know he can be trusted."

That is faith. "Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with inequity, those are they who shall have the security and those are they who go aright" (Qur'an). Since man is totally dependent upon God, we are bound to yield by faith the full homage of intellect and will to God who reveals himself. Since without faith we cannot please God and to attain the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attain justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life unless he/she has preserved in it to the end.

Faith is the experience of the one who is not strong and need someone to rely on. This experience is manifested in the life of Peter as he said when he was about to sink, "Lord save me."

2014 Aug 5 Tue: Ordinary Weekday/ Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome

Jer 30: 1-2. 12-15. 18-22/ Ps 102: 16-18. 19-21. 29 and 22-23/ Mt 15: 1-2. 10-14

It's true that God struck Israel for its great guilt and wickedness or for being unfaithful to the covenant. But that does not mean that God forgets His promises or can on His part be unfaithful. His fidelity is ever permanent; it will have pity on Israel and restore it once again to the status of the people of God. "He will be their God and they shall be my people". God's goodness will be prevailing over human infidelity. God would see to it that His plans always get fulfilled. Hence, we can always return to God and find mercy and salvation. There is no reason why human should despair of their situation or lose their trust in God. Those who serve as leaders in our Church should command our respect and support, not our criticism, especially if

that criticism is intended to inflate our own position or opinion. As God's servants, God is the one with final responsibility for them. A little praise helps keep the machinery of leadership well oiled. When our words are displeasing, God's anger burns!

p2014 Aug 6 Wed: TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD F

Dn 7: 9-10. 13-14/ Ps 97: 1-2. 5-6. 9/ 2 Pt 1: 16-19/ Mt 17: 1-9

The Transfiguration of Jesus is the mid-point of Mark's Gospel. This manifestation is in fact one of the most important in the New Testament. Though not the summit, it is in fact the summary of all revelations. As Moses and Elijah were led by God to the mountain, to witness his Glory (Ex. 33:18; I King. 19:9), so the Apostles are also led apart by Jesus, they too climb the mountain and there Jesus manifest his glory to them.

Listen to Him! (v.7). The Apostles have been accompanying Jesus for more than a year, with misunderstanding increasing between him and the religious authorities of the people of God. For them a question could arise: Is not Jesus mistaken? Are not the certitudes of God's people on the side of the priests and scribes?

When Jesus worked miracles for the sick and over the forces of nature, he showed that the present order of the world is not permanent. Now the curtains are partially opened; would that the Apostles understood that the Son of Man, as Jesus calls himself, is close to his resurrection. In a little while his fellow citizens will hang him on a cross. In a little while too, the father will give him the glory that awaits him. The shining cloud, the dazzling white clothes are external signs that indicate something of the mystery of Jesus: the day he rises from among the dead, his human nature will be transformed and extended by divine energies, so that he may fill everything in everyone.

While living among his disciples, Jesus had often spoken to them of his kingdom, and of his second coming in glory-the 'parousia' at the end-time. But, about a year before his passion, in order to strengthen them in their faith in the kingdom and of his glory there in, he gave them a wonderful vision, and experience that was to prepare them the better for what was to come.

The Transfiguration was a turning point in which Jesus was not only seen revealed first-hand as the long awaited Messiah, but was acknowledged as the beloved and Only begotten Son of God by the Father. For Peter, James and John, it was a foretaste of the very essence of his redemptive work that would translates itself into the Resurrection, the basis of which is suffering and death. Indeed, the transfiguration prefigures the everlasting enthronement of Christ. It is this glorification that the Church celebrates today.

2014 Aug 7 Thu: Ordinary Weekday/ Sixtus II, pp, mt, & co., mts/ Cajetan, p
Jer 31: 31-34/ Ps 51: 12-13. 14-15. 18-19/ Mt 16: 13-23

Faith in the son of God, which Peter, among the Apostles is the first to proclaim, really comes from God. This faith is not a human opinion, or a sentimental attachment. It does not come from 'flesh and blood'; an expression that the Jews meant that is purely human, what a human being does and understands by his own capacity. The words with which Jesus greets Peter, "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah..." are true for all the believers for it is the Father who has chosen us and has brought us to Christ.

The primacy of Peter is also emphasized. His name was Simon, but Jesus gave him this surname of Rock, foreseeing that he would be for his Church a foundation rock. This change of name attests that a mission is given to him as happened to Abraham and Jacob.

Is what Jesus tells Peter true also of his successors? No one can deny that even in the Old Testament God wanted his people to have a visible head. When God chose David, he promised him that his sons would rule the kingdom of God forever: this promise was fulfilled in Christ. Now Jesus chooses Peter to be forever the visible foundation of the building. In the future his successors will be for the Church, what Peter was in the early Church.

For the Jews, "to bind and to unbind", (v.19) meant to state what is forbidden and what is allowed. So Peter and his successors will have the last word about what is, or is not, the faith of the Church. The history of the primitive Church shows that, already in the first centuries the local Churches were conscious of the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome, successor of Peter.

The recognition of the mission of Peter's successor however does not mean that his word drowns all other voices in a silent Church, or that his authority justifies a structure that might crush life. His authority is only genuine in a Church where all the right to express themselves, where the leaders are not only imposed, but also accepted.

2014 Aug 8 Fri: Dominic, p, rf M

Na 2: 1. 3; 3: 1-3. 6-7/ Dt 32: 35cd-36ab. 39abcd. 41/ Mt 16: 24-28

What Jesus intends here is to emphasise the need for the disciples to realize that they must be willing to forsake their own way of living and the outworking of their own will-if the will of God was to be done in their own lives. Jesus was speaking about a death to a whole way of life; he was talking about the utmost in self-sacrifice, a very death to selfishness and all forms of self-seeking.

Many in the Church have thought that material wealth and prosperity is an advantage which should be striven for simply because the material gain can be employed in the support of furthering the Gospel of the kingdom. Some who have achieved great wealth and riches may have walked out of God's will for their own lives by turning their backs on the way that had been prepared for them in one of lowliness and humility which was removed from the wealth of their present circumstances.

Jesus draws attention to the great option of every human life: we cannot discover God; we cannot make a success of life without sacrificing it. All the rest is idle talk. The option terrifies us in the same measure that life for us seems promising. It is also the reason why marriage and family frightens many.

Christian freedom and happiness are found only in the joyous acceptance of the will of God which invites us to listen to his son and follow him down the road and paths that he travelled. Jesus through his obedience to his father has shown us the way for our salvation. We are called to take that same path. In the course of our journey we may face tribulations of any sort yet Jesus assures us that he will help us carry the cross. Jesus is the Lord.

2014 Aug 9 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM/ Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, v, mt

Hab 1: 12 – 2: 4/ Ps 9: 8-9. 10-11. 12-13/ Mt 17: 14-20

Although the disciples had been able to drive out the demons in the past, they were not able to drive out this one. It's safe to say that they were intimidated by the apparent power of this particular demon. They were focusing on their limited personal experiences and on the episodes they had in the past with weaker demons. They didn't think they could exorcise such an apparently awful demon. Jesus rebukes them for their lack of faith. How often do we limit the power of God's love in our lives? How often do we take our eyes off of Christ and focus on

the obstacles in our path or our personal weaknesses? Do you find yourself arguing for your weaknesses? Argue for your weaknesses, and they'll be yours.

The Faith can Move Mountains. What is Jesus talking about? How can my faith move mountains? This is certainly a puzzling statement from our Lord. Christ is trying to remind us about the nature of faith. Faith is a gift from God. It is one of the theological virtues that we receive at baptism. We have to thank God for this gift and learn to appreciate it by living it. Along these lines, you could say that faith is like a muscle. We have to exercise our faith so that it grows and becomes sturdy and resilient. Ultimately, by believing all that God has revealed to us and committing ourselves to God, we should seek to know, love, and fulfill God's will in our lives. He has a great plan for all of us; and if that plan includes moving mountains and converting thousands of souls, then we can be sure that we will be given all that we need to succeed.

With God All Things Are Possible. We have all been amazed in our lives. We have all seen things that we never expected to witness. Perhaps, you have even seen or personally experienced a miracle. Now, think of a particular unfortunate or frustrating circumstance in your life that you don't believe will ever change. Perhaps, you or a loved one is suffering from an addiction. Perhaps, your marriage is on the brink of divorce. Nothing has seemed to work. You don't think anybody can help you. Have you tried prayer? Have you persevered in your prayer, or have you put up roadblocks to the grace of God?

2014 Aug 10 SUN: NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

1 Kgs 19: 9a. 11-13a/ Ps 85: 9. 10. 11-12. 13-14/ Rom 9: 1-5/ Mt 14: 22-33

The readings for this week speak of God's saving presence for his people and the need of trusting faith in a loving and providing God who always keeps us company. The first reading tells us how Elijah the prophet could defeat the false priests of Baal with the help of such a trusting faith in the power of Yahweh and later how he lost that faith and took to flight when his life was in danger. In the second reading, Paul laments how the Jews lost their faith in Yahweh and His prophets and consequently rejected Jesus the promised Messiah. The gospel episode explains how Peter lost his trusting faith in Jesus for a few seconds and consequently failed in his attempt to walk on water.

It is hard for us to imagine that the apostles could fail to recognize Jesus. Surely it was dark – and they were being tossed about by the waves –, but who else could it be walking on the water and telling them to take courage? How easily we forget that the Lord is with us at all

times. He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. He and the Father have made their home in our hearts, yet we sometimes wonder whether or not he has forgotten about us. He promised us that he would not leave us orphans. He told us that we are his friends. He has prepared a place for us in the Father's house. We are his sons and daughters. Nevertheless, he tests those whom he loves. Therefore, do not lose faith in God when things do not go your way or when the events of life seem incomprehensible.

Come to Me. Christ is always inviting us to come to him. He wants us to have great confidence in him. He wants us to believe that we can do all things with his help — even walk on water. Of course, his ways are not our ways. Therefore, we should not be surprised that we are asked to walk with the Lord in the obscurity of faith. At the same time, we cannot forget that without Christ we can do nothing. Therefore, if we start focusing on our weaknesses and on those things that we do not have any control over, we are bound to sink into the depths of sin and ineffectiveness. If you want to be happy and successful, then you have to keep your eyes focused on Christ and be proactive. Like St Paul, we have to live our lives by faith and not by sight.

Riding Out the Storm. Just because Jesus was in their midst, it did not guarantee the apostles a smooth ride. Nevertheless, after working hard and having their faith tested, Jesus got into the boat and commanded the sea to be still. God will never test us beyond our strength. You may feel like you are at the breaking point. You may even be sinking, but God will not let you down. Jesus truly is the Son of God, and he loves us more than we love ourselves. He wants us to live with him and in him more than we ourselves desire to be happy and truly fulfilled. Like a demanding coach or great teacher, Jesus is going to push us out of our comfort zone. Like any surgeon that has to operate on a sick or injured patient, however, Jesus only cuts us in order to heal and make us stronger.

2014 Aug 11 Mon: Clare, v, rf M

Ez 1: 2-5. 24-28c/ Ps 148: 1-2. 11-12. 13. 14/ Mt 17: 22-27

Prophet Ezekiel was a message of hope to the people who lived during the time of exile in Babylon. His presence was a sign of God's presence to the people who were punished by God. He assures the people that the presence of God is with them always. This is the call of a leader even in the desperate situation a leader is called to give hope to the people so that the people are inspired to live a meaningful life. A good and positive homily or some inspiring action which is done by a leader can boost people who have lost their hope in life.

In the gospel reading we hear Jesus speaking about his death and resurrection. This was the third time that he spoke of his death and resurrection. Hearing this, the disciples were sad. They were focused on the death than the resurrection of Jesus. We are not sons and daughters of death but sons and daughters of resurrection. Let no negativity prevent us from experiencing us from the true freedom that Jesus gained for us through his death and resurrection.

By paying the tax Jesus is not expressing his fidelity to the rulers who oppressed them but he communicates the message that even in the worst situations of life we can be good. He does not want to give a bad message to the people. Let us not be a bad model or a stumbling block in the faith journey of others who are around us by living a life that is authentic and worthy of our call.

2014 Aug 12 Tue: Ordinary Weekday/ Jane Frances de Chantal, mw, rf
Ez 2: 8 – 3: 4/ Ps 119: 14. 24. 72. 103. 111. 131/ Mt 18: 1-5. 10. 12-14

Matthew today presented to us a “discourse on the Church,” giving specific instructions for the leaders of the Church to lead His Church. This is done by Jesus particularly to challenge his apostles who shared the Jewish hope that the Messiah would be a political ruler and hence they would enjoy all the benefits in His kingdom. Therefore, Jesus in today’s passage warns them and the future hierarchy in his Church against the natural human tendencies to power, wealth and pleasure and exhorts the spiritual leaders as well as all believers in responsible positions to be humble, trusting and innocent like children. To be like a child indicates the Kingdom values such as: children are basically innocent and honest. They are naturally humble because they depend on their parents for everything. They trust and obey their parents because they know that parents love them. So, Jesus’ advice for them is forget their (our) selfish ambitions and with trusting faith in a loving and providing God, spend their (our) lives serving others in all humility. Only then one can be great in the kingdom of heaven.

Let us therefore take to heart the word of God spoken to us today by practicing humility in thoughts, words and actions for Jesus has said, “Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart.” Secondly, we need not seek recognition and recompense for the service we do for Christ and the Church as parents, teachers, and above all as disciples of Christ our Lord. And finally, let us humble ourselves and teach our younger brothers and sisters too the value of simplicity and humility by our words and deeds in our everyday life.

2014 Aug 13 Wed: Ordinary Weekday/ Pontian, pp, mt, and Hippolytus, p, mt
Ez 9: 1-7; 10: 18-22/ Ps 113: 1-2. 3-4. 5-6/ Mt 18: 15-20

In the first reading we see God sending his messengers to destroy the evil doers and those who intend evil. While doing so he also makes sure that those who hate evil and the God fearing ones to keep safe. His nature is to protect the good from deceit and to destroy the evils in the world. Thus the first reading invites us not to be deceived by the evil thoughts and actions but to do what pleases him.

In the gospel reading we see Jesus instructing on how to correct others by various manner. This world is a world of immediate reactions and retaliations. No time to think and analyze the issue or the problems concerning others and oneself and so ending in misunderstanding and hatred feelings. No patience in tackling the issues and correcting others. Hesitation in inviting others to mirror their image to them as to what and how they are not doing what is expected of them in the society and in the church. Therefore the distance between the individuals swells more and more. Today Jesus is giving the message of how to handle a person concerning code of conduct. Personal correction is the prime and best correction which shows the love for the others welfare. Secondly, the correction in the presence of two witness is to ensure that the person is not out of the brotherly care given by others. Thirdly, the correction made in the community or the Church shows that all care for him since all are equal and to be taken care. Thus, Jesus is inviting us to examine ourselves as to which of the above category we belong to. When corrections are made on us it is precisely for the welfare of the other. When we take it in a good sense then we allow the Spirit of God to lead us in the right path or else we drive ourselves away from God and others. Therefore let us pray for the grace that we become people of proactive and good understanding so that we can live in harmony with one another inspite of our weaknesses and strengths.

2014 Aug 14 Thu: Maximilian Mary Kolbe, p, mt M

Ez 12: 1-12/ Ps 78: 56-57. 58-59. 61-62/ Mt 18: 21 – 19: 1

Asking how many times must I forgive the offenses of my brother or sister? may mean: — These persons I love so much also have their little ways and whims that bother me; day after day, they pester me every five minutes; they do not speak to me... Lord, how long am I supposed to put up with them?

And Jesus answers with the lesson of the patience. Actually, both colleagues coincide when they say: have patience. But, while the intemperance of the wicked one, strangling his companion for a few silver coins, provokes his moral and economic ruin, the king's patience, while saving the debtor, his family and his goods, magnifies the monarch's personality and generates the confidence of his court. The king's reaction in Jesus' words reminds us the Psalm that goes: "But you are willing to forgive, so that you might be honored" (Ps 130:4).

Evidently, we have to oppose to injustice, and energetically, if at all necessary. But indignation is healthy only when there is no selfishness, nor wrath, nor any nonsense, but our straight desire to fight for the truth. The authentic patience brings us to put up mercifully with contradiction, weakness, inconveniences, unreasonable persons or events. To be patient is tantamount to dominate oneself. Susceptible or violent persons cannot be patient because they neither take their time reflect about anything nor can they dominate themselves.

Patience is a Christian virtue because is a part of the message from the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is forged on the experience we all have defects.

2014 Aug 15 Fri: ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY S. Holy Day of Obligation.

*Vigil: 1 Chr 15: 3-4. 15-16; 16: 1-2/ Ps 132: 6-7. 9-10. 13-14/ 1 Cor 15: 54b-57/ Lk 11: 27-28.
Day: Rv 11: 19a; 12: 1-6a. 10ab/ Ps 45: 10. 11. 12. 16/ 1 Cor 15: 20-27/ Lk 1: 39-56*

Today, we celebrate the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in body and soul to Heaven. St. Bernard says, the Virgin, full of glory, is taken up to heaven, showering the celestials beings with joy. And he will add these precious words: "What a beautiful present the earth is today sending to heaven! With this wonderful gesture of friendship such as giving and receiving, the human and the divine, the earthly and the heavenly, the humble and the sublime, merge into one. It is there, the most precious earthly fruit, where the best presents and the most valuable gifts come from. Taken up to heaven, the Virgin Mary will lavish her gifts on all people.

The first gift she lavishes on us is the Word, that She knew how to keep so faithfully in her heart, by making it bear fruit from the very profound and warm silence. With this Word in her interior space, while begetting in her womb the Life for all people, Mary set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. Mary's presence exults in joy, and Elizabeth says: The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy.

She, mostly, presents us with the gift of her commendation, her same joy made music, her Magnificat: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit exults in God my savior!. What a beautiful gift the heaven sends back to us with Mary's song, made word of God. In this song we find the signs to learn how the human and the divine, the earthly and the celestial blend together, while being able to react, as She does, to the gift God presents us with, in the person of his Son, through his Saint Mother: to become a gift from God to the world, and tomorrow, a gift from mankind to God, by following Mary's example, who precedes us in this glorification which we are bound to.

2014 Aug 16 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM/ Stephen of Hungary, mm
Ez 18: 1-10. 13b. 30-32/ Ps 51: 12-13. 14-15. 18-19/ Mt 19: 13-15

Blessing of Children

Jesus in today's gospel tells the apostles who are stopping the children from approaching Him: "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

In this gospel episode, Jesus is angry, but He is certainly not angry with children or with those who are bringing them to Him. He is annoyed with His own disciples, which is unusual for Him. No doubt the disciples want to shield Jesus from the nuisance of noisy children.

During the time of Jesus the children were a negligible component of Jewish society. They have no social claims, having no achievements to speak of (compare with today's children). But Jesus not only gives the children importance and His blessing. He demonstrates to His disciples that God's love has ample room for everyone, including children. No one is unimportant to God. He even proposes these children as models of belonging to God's kingdom. Children are His example about how to accept the good news of God's love with open, simple and humble attitude.

Through His actions, Jesus is also teaching all of us of the value called spiritual childhood. This does not mean that we have to be childish in our dealings with people. It means that we must be childlike in our relationship with God so that we can approach Him with faith and confidence. We must treat God as our Most Beloved Father. We must have complete trust in God's love for us. At the same time, we should not have pretensions about ourselves or our accomplishments.

Another quality of children that we can imitate is their trust. Children have to be trusting. They depend on their parents and other adults for their survival and they know it. Even an abused child will trust his/her parents for quite a while before growing embittered. And also those people who trust God are the people who can be trusted. Trust in yourself and you are doomed to disappointment. But trust in God and you will never be confounded in time or eternity. At the end let us reflect these words about trust entitled, In what are you trusting?

2014 Aug 17 SUN: TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is 56: 1. 6-7/ Ps 67: 2-3. 5. 6. 8 (4)/ Rom 11: 13-15. 29-32/ Mt 15: 21-28

There are certain things about this woman which we must note:

First and foremost, this woman had love. She is a pagan but in her heart there was that love for her child which is always the reflection of God's love for His children. It was love that made her approached Jesus, accepted His silence and still appeal to Him. It was love that drove her to come near to Jesus.

Second, the woman had faith. She called Jesus as Son of David. It is a political title and yet full of meaning. A faith started to grow in her in which she looked at Jesus as a great and powerful wonder worker. Even though she came to Jesus like a magician but she ended up calling Him, 'Lord.'

Third, this woman had indomitable persistence. This woman came to Jesus because Jesus was not just a possible helper; He was her only hope. She came with a passionate hope, a clamant sense of need and a refusal to be discouraged. For her, prayer was no ritual form but an outpouring of the passionate desire of her soul which somehow felt that she could not and must not and need not take no for an answer.

If we apply into our lives what had happened to the Canaanite woman, we become discourage and immediately, all of a sudden, we give up. This is what Jesus does not want us to do, but rather, to have a strong, firm and persistent type of faith in Him.

2014 Aug 18 Mon: Ordinary Weekday

Ez 24: 15-23/ Dt 32: 18-19. 20. 21/ Mt 19: 16-22

Today, the liturgy of the Word submits to our consideration the famous passage of the rich young man that young man that did not succeed in reacting to the eye-beaming look Jesus Christ cast at him. John Paul II reminds us that we can recognize in that young man all those that approach Jesus Christ by asking him about the meaning of their own lives: Master, what good work must I do to receive eternal life? His Holiness comments that Jesus' interlocutor feels there is a connection between the moral sense and the fulfillment of his own destiny.

Today, too, how many ask themselves that same question! If we look around us, we may think there are not that many who can see beyond, or, perhaps, that the 21st century man does not need that type of questions, being the answers are no good enough for him.

Jesus answers him: Why do you ask me about what is good? Only one is Good. If you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments. It is not only quite legitimate to wonder about the beyond, about the meaning of life, but... we must do it! The young man has asked what he must do to receive eternal life, and Jesus Christ has answered that he must be good.

For some, or for many it does not really matter. Now a days it may seem impossible "to be good"... Or it may seem something with little sense: a piece of nonsense, in fact! But, today, as well as twenty centuries ago, Jesus Christ keeps on reminding us that to enter eternal life we must keep the Commandments of the Law of God: it is not the "A" mark we can aim to, but the only way for us to resemble God so that we may enter in the eternal life hand in hand with our Father-God. Actually, Jesus teaches us that the commandments are not to be understood as a minimum limit we should not exceed, but rather as an open path leading to a moral and spiritual way of perfection, whose most intimate impulse is love (John Paul II).

2014 Aug 19 Tue: Ordinary Weekday/ John Eudes, p, rf

Ez 28: 1-10/ Dt 32: 26-27ab. 27cd-28. 30. 35cd-36ab/ Mt 19: 23-30

Though Christ spoke so strongly, few that have riches do not trust in them. How few that are poor are not tempted to envy! Christ's words show that it is hard for a rich man to be a good Christian, and to be saved. The way to heaven is a narrow way to all, and the gate that leads into it, a strait gate; particularly so to rich people. More duties are expected from them than from others, and more sins easily beset them.

It is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world. Rich people have a great account to make up for their opportunities above others. It is utterly impossible for a man that sets his heart upon his riches, to get to heaven. Christ used an expression, denoting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the power of man. Nothing less than the almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. Who then can be saved? If riches hinder rich people, are not pride and sinful lusts found in those not rich, and as dangerous to them? Who can be saved? says the disciples. None, said Christ, by any created power. The beginning, progress, and perfecting the work of salvation, depend wholly on the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible. Not that rich people can be saved in their worldliness, but that they should be saved from it. Peter said, we have forsaken all. Alas! it was but a poor all, only a few boats and nets; yet observe how Peter speaks, as if it had been some mighty thing.

We are too apt to make the most of our services and sufferings, our expenses and losses, for Christ. However, Christ does not upbraid them; though it was but little that they had forsaken, yet it was their all, and as dear to them as if it had been more. Christ took it kindly that they left it to follow him; he accepts according to what a man hath. Our Lord's promise to the apostles is that when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, he will make all things new, and they shall sit with him in judgment on those who will be judged according to their doctrine. This sets forth the honour, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry. Our Lord added that everyone who had forsaken possessions or comforts, for his sake and the gospel, would be recompensed at last. May God give us faith to rest our hope on this his promise; then we shall be ready for every service or sacrifice. Our Saviour, in the last verse, does away a mistake of some. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly ones are, but according to God's pleasure. Let us not trust in promising appearances or outward profession. Others may, for aught we know, become eminent in faith and holiness.

2014 Aug 20 Wed: Bernard, ab, dr M

Ez 34: 1-11/ Ps 23: 1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6/ Mt 20: 1-16

It's not about seniority!!!

What counts in the kingdom of God is not seniority or years of service, but diligence of heart as a chosen one. Through the parable, it is like Jesus said to Peter and the others: "You are privileged to be with Me, to be here early, to 'sit on twelve thrones.' But others will come into the kingdom. You must not claim a special honor above them or an exalted place over them (see Matt. 20:25-28). All men, no matter when they come in, are equally precious to God." Reward in the kingdom is not dispensed by virtue of time served but by grace extended to the

chosen (willing; many are called but not willing). Seniority does not necessarily mean honor. Experience in years doesn't promise greater pay. Remember, it is all based on grace - not ordinary human economic calculations of so much pay for so much work.

William Barclay said this well, with these words: "Sometimes a man dies full of years and full of honor, with his day's work ended and his task completed. Sometimes a young person dies almost before the door of life and achievements have opened at all. From God they will both receive the same welcome, for both Jesus Christ is waiting, and for neither, in the divine sense, has life ended too soon or too late."

2014 Aug 21 Thu: Pius X, pp M

Ez 36: 23-28/ Ps 51: 12-13. 14-15. 18-19/ Mt 22: 1-14

This was Jesus' way of teaching the inadequacy of self-righteousness. From the very beginning, God has provided a "covering" for our sin. To insist on covering ourselves is to be clad in "filthy rags" (Is 64:6). Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame, but they found their fig leaves to be woefully scant. God took away their handmade clothes and replaced them with skins of (sacrificed) animals (Gen 3:7,21). In the book of Revelation, we see those in heaven wearing "white robes" (Rev 7:9), and we learn that the whiteness of the robes is due to their being washed in the blood of the Lamb (verse 14). We trust in God's righteousness, not our own (Philippians 3:9).

Just as the king provided wedding garments for his guests, God provides salvation for mankind. Our wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ, and unless we have it, we will miss the wedding feast. When the religions of the world are stripped down to their basic tenets, we either find man working his way toward God, or we find the cross of Christ. The cross is the only way to salvation (Jn 14:6).

For his crime against the king, the improperly attired guest is thrown out into the darkness. For their crimes against God, there will be many who will be consigned to "outer darkness"—existence without God for eternity. Christ concludes the parable with the sad fact that "many are invited, but few are chosen." In other words, many people hear the call of God, but only a few heed it.

To summarize the point of the Parable of the Wedding Feast, God sent His Son into the world, and the very people who should have celebrated His coming rejected Him, bringing judgment upon themselves. As a result, the kingdom of heaven was opened up to anyone who will set aside his own righteousness and by faith accept the righteousness God provides in

Christ. Those who spurn the gift of salvation and cling instead to their own "good" works will spend eternity in hell.

The self-righteous Pharisees who heard this parable did not miss Jesus' point. In the very next verse, "the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words" (Mt 22:15). The Parable of the Wedding Feast is also a warning to us, to make sure we are relying on God's provision of salvation, not on our own good works or religious service. Where are we?

Augt ,22, 2014 Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Ezk 37:1-14, Ps 107:2-3, 4-5,6-7,8-9, Matthew 22:34-40

Today's gospel is the exchange between Jesus and a lawyer took place during the busy and intense last week before the crucifixion. Jesus responded, not just by picking out two commandments at random. He cited one commandment that pertains directly to man in relationship with His God: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." He said, "This is the first and great commandment." Through this our Lord taught us that the love of God must dwell in all the parts of our complex nature, filling the whole man with its gracious sanctifying influence; we must try to love him with the whole strength of all our highest faculties. Such love, the first duty of the Christian, is also the source of his sweetest, holiest joy. There is no earthly joy like that which flows from the love of those dearest to us; and as the love of God is of all forms of love beyond comparison the highest, so the joy which streams from that love is of all joys unutterably the deepest and the most blessed.

2014 Aug 23 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM/ Rose of Lima, v
Ez 43: 1-7ab/ Ps 85: 9ab and 10. 11-12. 13-14/ Mt 23: 1-12

Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi, to which the priests and those in charge of religious activities belonged. He did not likewise; belong to any religious association, as the Pharisees did. He was on the side of the people and saw how the leaders of God's people and the organised religious elite acted.

Obviously Mathew wants the words of Jesus to fall on the ears of important personages in the communities. Jesus judges in advance the authorities of the Church and more especially any group that sees itself the better, the more aware and the more efficacious. The Pharisees pretended to be just that, and in a sense they were.

The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees have sat down on the chair of Moses. The Gospel says it more precision: they have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. The rather ironic formula suggests that the ambitions appropriate to themselves the authority over the people of God and that to a certain point God tolerates it. Mathew, in recording these words of Jesus, wants to preserve in the Church fundamental equality. It is the whole Church that enjoys the Holy Spirit and the heads or doctors will have no authority unless they are deeply rooted in the community's life.

The bad example of the authorities does not discredit the word of God, nor does it lessen the principle of authority. Their bad attitude discredits only their pretence at being superior to others. They cannot renounce their authority on the pretext of humble service and then carry out what the majority has decided.

Jesus speaks of the form of authority. Do not be called master or father. Do not be called "master", the one "who knows" and before whom one is silent; neither must you be called "father", the one who is venerated and imitated, forgetting to look directly at the one who alone is good. No one in the Church should eclipse the only "Father".

Doubtless everyone will say that the word "Father" is simply the expression of respectful affection but Jesus affirms that the word has perverse effects. The purity of faith, which submits to God alone, always suffers because of the cult of personality. The Church should be a community of free persons able to speak frankly.

2014 Aug 24 SUN: TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Is 22: 19-23/ Ps 138: 1-2. 2-3. 6. 8 (8bc)/ Rom 11: 33-36/ Mt 16: 13-20

Today Pope Francis has managed to get the attention of the world at large in whatever he does or says. What makes the world look at him in this way; it is very simple answer for he is a Shepherd entrusted to carry on the Church that our Lord has empowered Peter and his successors to continue the Mission of Jesus himself. Therefore, what we can learn from today's readings is the quality of leadership called "shepherding." Our priests, bishops and the pope are the shepherds of the faithful in their parishes and diocese and of the world respectively. They

are called to be Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd for everyone today, in imitation of him, in obedience to him, and as a voice speaking for him, inheriting the role from Saint Peter. But this is not only applicable to them, but to all leaders in every sphere of life to imitate Jesus' style of shepherding. For examples, Parents are to do for their children; teachers are to do it for their students. Employers are to do it as they shepherd their employees. So the list goes on and on.

In doing so, let us take to our heart that whatever we do let us do all by the wisdom we've gained from experience and from the Holy Spirit. We find ways to bridge the gaps of division between the rich and poor and the least and the lost. We have to see that they could be free and enjoy life as meant by God the Father in his Wisdom and insights and also to make sure of them and the salvations of their souls.

2014 Aug 25 Mon: Ordinary Weekday/ Louis of France, mm/ Joseph Calasanz, p, rf
2 Thes 1: 1-5. 11-12/ Ps 96: 1-2a. 2b-3. 4-5/ Mt 23: 13-22

Many teachers of the people of God are obstacles on the path leading to the true knowledge of God the Father. Even in the smallest village, the Jews had teachers of the Law but in fact, crowds came to Jesus to ask for what those priests and teachers did not give them. How can we forget that even in the Church religious education is often limited to moral compartment and keeping within religious norms?

By 'swearing by the gold of the Temple' Jesus refers to the common practices in his time. Some teachers found ways to get around certain oaths. In that manner, clever people could swear falsely, and deceive their opponents by swearing firmly without promising much.

How could Jesus call such men hypocrites when they were so versed in the knowledge of the Bible? In the language of Jesus, the word "hypocrite" equally denotes what is superficial as well as the one who makes light of what is of God. Obviously not all the Pharisees were hypocrites; but Jesus denounces a frequent deformation in the religious elite. He calls us to be wary of those institutions born of possessors of wealth and culture who aspire to direct others-and the Church-without having learned from the poor or practiced true humility.

The mystery of God is so deep that no one can present himself as his lieutenant. The Pharisees, trained, taught and gained many followers in the faith but their fasts and alms were already rewarded. Pride and love of money were given their place. It invites us to check our attitude towards our position in the society.

2014 Aug 26 Tue: Ordinary Weekday

2 Thes 2: 1-3a. 14-17/ Ps 96: 10. 11-12. 13/ Mt 23: 23-26

Today, Jesus assumes a clear attitude of diatribe: 'Woe to you (...)!!' (Mt 23:23-25). His objectives are the scribes and the Pharisees, who represent the powerful class exerting a spiritual and moral influence over people. How can they ever lead people if they are "blind guides"? Their blindness lies in the incoherency of scrupulously observing the small details, which do have importance, while neglecting the weightier things of the Law, such as justice, love and fidelity. They are concerned over their own image, but it does not correspond to their inside, full of 'plunder and self-indulgence' (Mt 23:25). Curiously enough, Jesus uses here words referring to economic aspects.

Today's Gospel represents an invitation for those persons and most outstanding groups of the Christian communities, that is, their guides, to appraise their conscience. Do we respect the fundamental values? Do we value norms more than people? Do we impose upon others what we cannot do, ourselves? Do we speak from the complacency of our own ideas or from our humility of heart? As Dom Helder Camara said: 'I would like to be a puddle of water to become the mirror of heaven'. Do people consider their pastors, men of God who can tell the accessory from the fundamental? Feebleness deserves understanding, but hypocrisy provokes contempt.

When listening at today's Gospel we may fall into some sort of snare. Jesus speaks to the scribes and to the Pharisees, who are hypocrites, for there were also who were not. And we may conclude that this text, today, may be intended for bishops and priests, only. As guides of the Christian communities they must certainly be careful not to tumble upon those attitudes denounced by God, but we must also remember that every believer —man or woman— may harbour in his inside a "blind Pharisee". Jesus invites us to: 'Cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean' (Mt 23:26). The path to spirituality is through the human heart.

2014, 27 AUG WEDNESDAY (ST. MONICA)

2THES 3:6-10, 16-18 MT 23:27-32

Today, the church remembers St. Monica a mother of the doctor of the church St. Augustine. Under the patronage of St. Monica as one who knew well how to overcome evil with good, there was founded in the 19th century in Paris an association of Christian mothers for mutual prayer on behalf of wayward sons and husbands.

In the first reading St. Paul teaches us how to wait for the second coming of the lord. The lord is coming at any moment therefore; St. Paul reminds us that we should do our daily duties while waiting for the coming of the lord. Live in the present and do what we are supposed to do is waiting for the lord. That is to tell us that we should be ready to meet the lord hence, we should be alert and active to welcome the lord. We know neither the time nor hour of the coming of the lord therefore we are invited to stay wake and to remain alert.

In the Gospel reading we see Jesus is condemning the teachers of the law and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. We have on one side the prophets and on the other those who kill the prophets. The Bible shows us that the prophets meet with much opposition among the people of God and especially among its leaders. Prophets are readily condemned when they challenge peace and unity in mediocrity or even unfaithfulness to the word of God.

In today's context we find the same trend, where good people who stand for truth and justice face opposition from various authorities. Good people who want to remove evil from society was threatened and killed. Are we ready to stand for truth and justice amidst great opposition?

2014, 28 AUG, THURSDAY (ST. AUGUSTINE)

1COR 1:1-9, MT 24:42-51

Born on 13 November 354, Augustine was 42 when he was made bishop of hippo. Labouring for another 34 years, he revitalized the entire African church, becoming the patriarch of monasticism. He lived an austere community life with his priest. Died of a fever on 28 August 430 while the vandal invaders were besieging hippo. He is honoured as the patron of theologians, printers and brewers, and is invoked against sore eyes. Since the 8 century his relics repose in Pavia, having been bought from the Saracens for a huge sum by the Lombard king Luitprand.

In the first reading we see Paul defends his authority of proclaiming the gospel. He reminds the Corinthians, to remain steadfast and faithful in their rivalries, because they are part of a greater reality the universal church of God. St. Paul reminds us that we are called to be holy and to live a holy life in this world. We have to become holy, but we already are. Holy, in the biblical sense, is the person or thing that belongs to God. The baptized have been consecrated to God and form part of the people who belong to God, the assembly of the holy ones, which is the church. God's call does not allow us to remain as we are. Our conscience readily adapted to the moral norms of our situation, but now, God's call demands a

renunciation of a certain vision of existence based on the natural. We called to change our orientation and perspective towards an ideal of life found in the person of Christ.

In his advice to the Corinthians, Paul shows us how to act when reviewing the activities of our parish or our apostolic group. Instead of being discouraged by the problems we face and accusing one another when something fails, the first thing to do is to remember what we already have in common. These communities, in fact like our own had to face their problems and their weakness. Each generation of Christians must learn to follow Jesus and build church, or better still be the church. The hope that maintains the tone of faith is the return of Christ. The first Christian generation expected to witness his glorious coming; he would judge the world and take his own with him.

2014 Aug 29 Fri: Martyrdom of John the Baptist M

1 Cor 1: 17-25/ Ps 33: 1-2. 4-5. 10-11/ Mk 6: 17-29

The gospel is the gory story of the martyrdom of John the Baptist. A rash promise and unwillingness to admit a mistake lead to the death of John.

The account of John the Baptist's death is related between the time the twelve were sent forth and the time they came back. Mark is quite accurate in the order of the events he records. On a visit to his brother Philip, Herod and Philip's wife became infatuated with each other and married. John the Baptist evidently preached in that locality and took occasion to denounce this evil marriage. Herodias, the wife of Herod, was much stirred up by John's preaching and seems to have tried to bring about his death. Perhaps this was why Herod put John in prison, to protect him from Herodias' plot to kill him. It seems Herod rather liked John the Baptist. He "did many things," but he did not do the right thing. Herodias watched her chance and schemed to bring about John's death. Herod's birthday was celebrated with a great feast. When Herod and his guests were probably drunk, Herodias' daughter, evidently by her former husband, came in and danced and greatly pleased these intoxicated men. Herod, in his enthusiasm, promised whatever she would ask. She reported to her mother who told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Herod between two horns of a dilemma. Herod had to do one of two things, neither of which he wanted to do when he came to his senses. He must break his oath or behead John the Baptist. He preferred to commit murder rather than break his oath, influenced very much by what his guests might think of him.

John the Baptist has been executed-beheaded at a dinner party by Herod to please his brother's wife who he had taken as his own, after murdering his brother. John the Baptist understood what his life has to become and so adapted a lifestyle in accordance with the Old Testament prophets. The quality that we can take home from the life of John the Baptist is his untiring

passion, a passion to see Christ. This passion makes him to leap in his mother's womb when he sees the Mother of God. This passion sets him on fire. There is nothing more powerful than a human soul on fire. John was a man on passion and fire. That caused many trials and tribulations and eventually to his martyrdom.

The life of John would teach us to discover the purpose for which we are all created. God's purpose of creating us may require that we walk to a different drumbeat than other people. For John the Baptist it required that he live in the desert far from normal human contact and civilization. He adapted a lifestyle that would enhance his calling in life. To discern what God is calling us to be, we need to cultivate some sort of desert in our lives where we can listen to God. And, to be faithful to the call of God, we need the courage and discipline to keep away from any choice of association or lifestyle that does not help us along the path to which God has called us. John is great today not just because God called him to a special vocation but because he walked faithfully in the path that leads to the goal that God had set for him. Let this fire of John disturb us today and that we may understand our call to be men of fire burning brightly for the love of God and prepare ourselves and others to receive the Lord in our daily living.

2014 Aug 30 Sat: Ordinary Weekday/ BVM

1 Cor 1: 26-31/ Ps 33: 12-13. 18-19. 20-21/ Mt 25: 14-30

During the time of Jesus, a talent was a amount, thirty kilograms of precious metal, but in this parable when Jesus spoke of the talent he referred to the abilities given by God to each of us. Since, then, people came to understand the word 'talent' in this sense.

The master's proclamation of good and faithful servant (v.21) could be translated as 'reliable'. We do not find any word of religious vocabulary in this parable. God sees the way one has used his talents, and the sin is to have kept for self what one has received. What condemnation of a society where it is usual to enjoy and consume what has been received; a better human formation and knowledge inherited from the homeland which should be transmitted to one's descendents, the blessings and benefits of a family where the parents knew how to sacrifice themselves for their children, and perhaps the word of God to be carried out in order to realize God's great plan for the world.

"I will entrust you in charge of many things". What we achieve on earth is not definitive but only the scaffolding: quite other will be the riches that God will distribute to those who will live in him. "You know that I reap where I have not sown" (v.26). As in Luke 18:1, Jesus is aware of

or un avowed defiance towards God and takes us at our word. If we do not aspire to the place that the husband reserves for a wife, let us try to at least not to be useless servants.

There are many opportunities for us to take initiatives, but we often are afraid to put ourselves forward: "I am not the most qualified". What if those who are qualified have not budged? Then, take the talent from him and give it to someone else.

2014 Aug 31 SUN: TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jer 20: 7-9/ Ps 63: 2. 3-4. 5-6. 8-9 (2b)/ Rom 12: 1-2/ Mt 16: 21-27

In the first reading God compelled Jeremiah to undertake a work against his will, but he could not prevail against God. The prophet complains of the insult and injury he experienced and still he continued on with the works of God. This is to teach us that amidst trials and difficulties we should never leave the works god entrusted us to do.

The lesson we need to learn from the gospel today is the lesson of being ready to let go of one's comfort for the greater cost of proclaiming the gospel. Jesus taught us that to proclaim the good news death of different sorts must happen in our lives. We must be ready to take on sacrifices even in the midst of temptations.