

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

NOVEMBER 18, 2018

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: RV 1:1-4; 2:1-5; LK 18:35-43

TUESDAY: RV 3:1-6,14-22; LK 19:1-10

WEDNESDAY: RV 4:1-11; LK 19:11-28

THURSDAY: RV 5:1-10; LK 19:42-44

FRIDAY: RV 10:8-11; LK 19: 45-48

SATURDAY: RV 11:4-12; LK 20:27-40

**NEXT SUNDAY: SOLEMNITY OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNI-
VERSE DN 7:13-14, RV 1:5-8; JN 18:33B-37**

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: BONITA GRACE HORMANT

TUESDAY: FR. AMBROSE ZIEGLER

WEDNESDAY: PAUL VELTEN

THURSDAY: BONNIE SNOUWAERT

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: DONALD CLAPP

7:30: DEC. OF ANDERSON FAMILY

10:00: FR. AMBROSE ZIEGLER

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Carl & Scott Waclawik. Marian Schwartz. (Judy Buckles, Mary Salrin, Larry & Deb Johnston). (Burnell, Anna & Henry Totten, Robert Stump, Victor & Dorothy Ringle). Deceased members of Schlosser & Kanthack. Bob Bennett. Bohan family. Jane Clapp. (Gene & Genevieve Bullock, Hank & Jean Corbin). Donn Miles. Mary Ellen Wegtin. Bob Griffin. Fred Harless.

“Learn a lesson....”

St. Augustine's remark about God knowing us better than we know ourselves is something we need to keep in mind on a regular basis. In this simple statement we can arrive at something bordering on the miraculous when it comes to that life-long process of self-understand (assuming we are interested in such things). What better place to go when seeking knowledge about ourselves and ultimately our lives in this world when all we have to do is consult the God-man. In our spiritual reflection involving the scriptures we come face to face with ourselves. Ironically we think all these words are about God and we approach them with the intention of figuring Him out, thinking, all the while, that once we have done so we can go on with life. This attitude merely reflects the way we have been thinking since the so-called Enlightenment. The belief that once we have identified, classified and specified we can now be satisfied. What an arrogant approach! We only succeed in taking the mystery out of things and in the process cheapen creation and ourselves. We replace the true value of God's creation with the busy work of shifting ideas from one compartment to another in the belief that we are actually doing important work. God has this and US all figured out. “Learn a lesson Jesus says. In today's gospel he is referring to the “end times”, a concept that fascinates and entertains. It should do neither! We can't seem to help ourselves when it comes to this subject. We replace what appears to us to be the daily and tedious work of growing in grace by speculating about things beyond our comprehension and our own good for that matter. We think that by reflecting or I should say postulating we can put off the drudgery of actually applying ourselves to the task and hand which involves nothing less than clothing the naked, giving water to the thirsty and food to the hungry; visiting those ill or in prison, in short the work of believers. God knows that we have difficulty reigning in our imaginations (we actually encourage a free range imagination as a sign of creativity, failing to recognize that there is order in creation, at least God's creation!) After the Resurrection Jesus was asked numerous times about the “end”. His reply was simple and straightforward. Our response to his response should reflect this same simplicity. As part of a healthy spirituality we are required to consider our own mortality...in short reflect on the gift of life and be grateful for our many blessings. This does not however include an over indulgence in dramatic scenes played out against the backdrop of catastrophes and disasters. This activity only sidelines our real progress in the life of grace since we are staying away from our lessons and engaging in distracting day-dreaming. We need to acquire as much understanding of ourselves as possible and the only way to do this is returning to the word. There we come face to face with the creature so loved and so cared for that we may just surprise ourselves as to who and what this word may be referring to. When we acquire the kind of understanding of ourselves that God has of us we might just learn and thing or two. One of those lessons is that God wishes all of us to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The other is that God is love!

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Seek Ye First

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Matthew 6:33

What Every Catholic Needs to Know about putting God first Ten steps to making God our first and most important priority Leisa Anslinger

The first step toward a more mature and living faith is the desire and willingness to put God first in our lives. It seems so simple, and yet most of us realize this is a challenge of Christian living in today's world. Some might say it is the challenge.

Ordering our lives to make God our first and most important priority is for many of us a consistent element in need of attention. An Internet search illustrates the immensity of this challenge. Type “put God first” in your search engine, and 26.4 million responses appear. We are not alone, and we need help!

Go to any bookstore and you will find a large section of books labeled “Self-Help.” Many such books have been written by professionals whose experience leads them to believe they have beneficial insights for those whose lives need change or whose life skills need development or improvement.

In another section of the bookstore, we find collections of quotations or brief statements of direction or guidance. Some are lengthy; others are little more than one-liners. One particular genre of such books are labeled “Little Instruction” books and are intended to give the reader quick thought-bites, small statements of “instruction” for those in a particular stage or situation in life.

What about we who hope to put God first in our lives? Where do we go for challenge and inspiration? Where might we find a “little instruction” for making God our first priority? The answer seems simple enough: the Bible, the collective wisdom of the Tradition of the Church, the experience and witness of the saints who have gone before us — these hold the insight we need in order to learn the steps for making God the center of our lives.

But the Bible is no “Little Instruction” book, nor is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nor any collection of the lives of the saints. So, from whom or from what do we learn the steps to take to keep God our highest priority? Where will we find direction, and, importantly, how might we take what we find there and apply it to our lives today?

Learning from Jesus

While there are no doubt thousands of applicable quotations from a variety of sources, let us begin with our Lord and Master. What steps does Jesus teach us in order to put God first in our lives?

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In a telling passage in the Gospel of Mark, we learn from an encounter between Jesus and a scribe. Jesus is asked, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

The scribe recognizes the truth in Jesus’ reply, and we are told, “And when Jesus saw that [he] answered with understanding, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God’” (Mk 12:28-34).

Guiding Passage

Sacred Scripture is filled with insightful guidance for our living, but one section is particularly enlightening as a plan for the Christian life: Matthew 5:1-7:29, in which we learn from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

Instruction No. 1: Begin With A Reality Check

Any time we find ourselves drifting from our commitment to put God first, we must search our hearts to rediscover the reality of God’s love for us and to find again our real and true love for God. Sometimes we say we want to give our lives to Our Lord, yet we do little more than go through the motions. When our commitment comes from a real desire to love God, in response to the great love of God for us, keeping first things first becomes not only possible but desirable.

Where is your relationship with God at this time in your life? How will you take a step toward a deeper relationship with God, knowing that Our Lord is always ready to embrace your heart with love?

Instruction No. 2: Pay Attention:

Recognizing God’s love for us and deepening our response to that love is the work of our lifetime. Notice Jesus’ use of the foundational Shema prayer in response to the scribe’s question. That prayer guides the Jewish people, and us, to nurture a total and all-encompassing love for God — with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Such love requires attention to the One who is loved; such love cannot be ignored!

Being completely truthful to yourself, how much attention do you give God? How might you take a step toward increasing your attention to God each day?

Instruction No. 3: Give Out of Love

Jesus’ one commandment is twofold; love God, love neighbor. Because the scribe acknowledges Jesus’ answer, we are told that he is not far from God’s reign. Are we? Jesus links love of God with love of neighbor, yet often we try to keep our love for God in a neat and tidy place that seems to have little bearing on our actions. Jesus knows that when we love God, that love will be spilled out for others. The scribe who is not far from the kingdom of God understood this. Sometimes we need to recognize that we are blessed with talents and gifts that are meant to be shared. Disciples give of themselves in meaningful ways for others, especially the poor, lonely, imprisoned, sick and weak, by using their talents as reflections of God’s grace in their lives. This call to being poured out in service helps us to prioritize our lives in gratitude for the talents, time and resources we have been given, and for the grace of God which propels us toward others.

How will you take a step toward identifying and offering your talents in service, out of love for God and others?

Instruction No. 4: Pray

It is not surprising to think of prayer as an important step on the path to put God first in our lives. Prayer is the way to place God in the center of our lives, knowing that God is there first! “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him,” Jesus tells us, and then we are taught the **Lord’s Prayer** (see Mt 6:8-13). By ordering our day around prayer, our days take on a more ordered tone. We are able to clearly keep the challenges, activities and responsibilities of life in perspective, and realize again and again that God is both the path and the destination of our walk, step by step.

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“In bringing us to the reality of our life, prayer also introduces us to the reality of God’s life. We are put in touch with the persons of the Holy Trinity, not through words but at a deeper level. We feel that we are from the Father and that our whole life is a journey toward God. We discover a sense of solidarity with the Word, in our being bonded with the person of Jesus and in our union with all the saints,” Abbot Michael Casey writes in *“Toward God”* (Triumph, \$12.99). “We experience the presence of the Holy Spirit, inciting us to good, turning our thoughts to God, directing our actions, supplying for our weakness and, like a homing beacon for an incoming plane, guiding our steps toward the very heart of God.”

How might you take a step toward beginning or deepening prayer as the cornerstone of your day’s activities?

Instruction No. 5: Focus Time, Attention, Activity

How many times do we say, “Actions speak louder than words?” only to head into a rush of activities or a blur of details, losing sight of God’s path in the process? Jesus reminds us, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be” (Mt 6:19-21). Some of the steps on the path of faith and discipleship necessitate a step back in order to reflect and to regain a vision of that which is most important, so that we may focus our time, attention and activity with the goal of God’s way as our way. When we recall what is most important, we treasure the moments along the journey and our steps become surer and stronger.

In *“Go and Make Disciples,”* their pastoral letter on evangelization, the U.S. bishops wrote: “The Gospel speaks across time and space to each human being, each mind, each heart. It asks us what we think about our lives, how we hope, whom we love, and what we live for. If faith is not transforming each heart and life, it is dead” (No. 16).

Take a step back and reflect: How is your faith transforming your heart and life? Or drawing on Jesus’ words, what do you treasure, and how does what you treasure point to what is deep within your heart?

Instruction No. 6: Keep money in its place

This one is really rather straight-forward. “No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money].” Jesus does not tell us that money is evil, but rather directs us to keep money in its place as a resource for our living, and a blessing to be shared with those who are in need.

How might you take a step to be a good steward of your resources for the sake of others, in Christ’s name?

Instruction No. 7: Decisions are steps

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few” (Mt 7:13-14).

The decisions we make each day are the steps that either lead toward a life centered on God, or on a life that has as its center things that are not of God. Some decisions are clear-cut: Sunday Mass; beginning each day with prayer; cherishing family, friends and your faith community; serving those in need as a reflection of God’s love in the world.

Other decisions need the focus and direction of Church teaching, often through the personal guidance of the pastor or a knowledgeable staff member or teacher. The Catechism of the Catholic Church illustrates the importance of conscience formation in walking the narrow path to which Jesus refers: “In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path; we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord’s Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church” (No. 1785).

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The steps that lead us toward God are not always easy ones, as Jesus indicates in the passage above, but we are certain that Our Lord walks with us throughout the journey.

What steps on the narrow road do you find yourself needing to take? In what ways are you tempted to take the easy way instead? How will you take a step in which you put God and God's ways first?

Instruction No. 8: Trust in God

Ultimately, the steps on the path of faith and discipleship require us to make a decision: Do we trust in God or in the things of this world? It is not that the world is bad; Jesus came to redeem this world, and to restore our path toward God, but we do seem to have a great tendency to become consumed by worry and attention toward the passing things of this world rather than on putting God first in our lives. Jesus knows this, and offers this instruction: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself" (Mt 6:25-27,31-34).

How will you take a step to be reasonable in your acquisition of material goods? How will you trust in God's love, even when life seems uncertain?

Instruction No. 9; Eucharist and Reconciliation

"For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes" (1 Cor 11:23-26). What better way to really put God first than to remain in Christ through regular and active participation in the Eucharist and in the Sacrament of Penance? While we might sometimes think to ourselves, "How do I put God first whom I cannot see or hear, when there is so much around me that cries out for my attention that I can see and hear?" Yet when we take just a few moments to reflect on it, we realize we can see and hear God's presence and voice with clarity every time we participate in the Mass and in reconciliation.

We also remember that the sacraments celebrate our communion with Christ and with each other. As members of Christ's body, we bear responsibility for drawing others to Our Lord, to evangelize.

Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, said this: "To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings. A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as 'those who are a part of me.' This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship" (No. 43).

There is much in our society that tries to convince us that we do not need community in our lives. Yet we know that the Christian life is lived within the community of faith. Community places demands upon us, and we might prefer to be singularly focused on our lives as individuals or within our family at home. Yet we also recognize that being a "lone ranger" is not the Christian way. Being a part of a community that knows each other as "those who are a part of me" will give us the support, the call to be accountable and the sense of belonging that we need in order to prioritize our lives with God at the center. *How will you take a step toward more authentic participation in Mass, in the life of your parish, in the Sacrament of Penance? How might you draw others to Christ through the body of Christ, the Church?*

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Instruction No. 10: Learn from the saints

We recognize the saints as people who kept God first in their lives, often in the midst of the threat of bodily torture, imprisonment, persecution and trials beyond what most of us can imagine. We know that their resolve was not always without struggle. Still they found the grace to put God at the center of their lives and to order their thoughts, actions, decisions and relationships accordingly. As St. Teresa of Ávila prayed, "Let us make our way together, Lord; wherever you go I must go: and through whatever you pass, there too I will pass" ("The Way of Perfection," No. 26).

The saints who have gone before us lived as those whom Jesus describes as "blessed" in his Sermon on the Mount. They met the very real and challenging demands of life by placing their trust in God, and keeping God first before all else. They, like the scribe whom Jesus encountered, understood and embraced Jesus' path and found themselves "not far from the kingdom of God" in this life, and we believe they now enjoy God's presence for eternity.

How will you take a step toward putting God first in your life? Who stands as a model and inspiration for you? Who intercedes for you, asking the Lord to fill you with the wisdom and courage needed in order to grow in holiness?

Taking the Steps

We have considered 10 instructions for putting God first in our lives. What steps will you take in order to make God and God's ways your greatest priority?

How will you take a step toward:

Loving and trusting God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Being a good steward of your talents, time and resources out of love for God and others?

Expressing your relationship with God in prayer, participation in Mass, reconciliation and the life of your faith community, and in your decision-making?

Meaningful reflection on that which you treasure?

Putting God at the center of your life?

Leisa Anslinger is the editor of OSV's Grace In Action: Living Catholic Stewardship. She writes from Indiana.



Announcements and Upcoming Events



All are WELCOME to attend the Habitat House Blessing Nov 18th at 4:00 pm at 25 N. 22nd St. Lafayette. Thanks you to our St. Ann volunteers. We would like to thank the many work volunteers and hospitality volunteers that gave their time, talent and treasure that made this build a success. Dave and Jane Link and Barb Wood



MEMORIAL HALL AFTER ALL MASSES

Today's readings are in stark contrast to the joy of the holiday season that is fast approaching, warning us instead of dark times ahead and our inevitable judgment day.

The first reading from the prophet Daniel describes a time "unsurpassed in distress since nations began" and warns that "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, and others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace." The second reading, from Hebrews, speaks of Christ who "waits until his enemies are made his footstool."

However, when we firmly establish for ourselves as individuals — as a family and as a parish that we will give to God the first and best portion of our Time, Talent, and Treasure — the warnings we read in the Scriptures today should be no cause for alarm. In fact, we can view these words as encouragement — "Keep Calm and Steward On," no matter what comes our way.

One of the blessings of a stewardship way of life is that in challenging times, whether in our homes or workplaces or even our beloved Church itself, we can take great comfort in knowing we have a concrete plan to keep our priorities in right order. And, when we put God first in all aspects of our lives, we will experience the peace that He gives that surpasses all understanding.

On November 26, 2018 all clergy of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana will attend an all-day planning and visioning meeting. In an effort to be more forward-looking, the Bishop will be pulling all priests of the diocese together for discussions and conversations that will help the Diocese map out a strategic plan and vision for the next 5-10 years. This meeting is required for priests, and deacons are invited to attend if there is no conflict with their professional obligations.

SUNDAY OFFERING:

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"FIND OUT HOW MUCH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, AND FROM IT TAKE WHAT YOU NEED; THE REMAINDER IS NEEDED BY OTHERS"

ST. AUGUSTINE