St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Martinez, California September 9, 2018.

St. Catherine of Siena Parish follows Jesus by welcoming all, sharing our gifts & giving glory to God.
ST. JOSEPH PRAYER FOR PROTECTION & RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH

To you, St. Joseph we bring our broken hearts and all of the discouragement that weighs us down. Impurity and scandal have wounded our Church and have brought much shame, sorrow and tears. We ask you dearest St. Joseph, to be our guide along this very dark path, for you are the model of faith, purity and devotion that we need so desperately. May the Lord send forth the burning fire of the Holy Spirit, and renew the face of the Church, and the world. O St. Joseph, pray ceaselessly for the Church during this time of suffering and great mourning. May this current pain inflicted upon the Church be transformed by the power of Christ’s cross, and lead to further renewal and continued purification. Amen.

—Pedro de la Cruz, adjusted ©2018

www.CatholicPrayerCards.org

ORACIÓN A SAN JOSÉ PARA LA PROTECCIÓN Y RENOVACIÓN DE LA IGLESIA

Traemos ante ti, San José, nuestros corazones quebrantados y todo el desaliento que nos agobia. La impureza y el escándalo han herido a nuestra Iglesia y han traído mucha vergüenza, tristeza y lágrimas. Queridísimo San José, te pedimos que seas nuestro guía en este camino tan oscuro, pues tu eres el modelo de fe, pureza y devoción que necesitamos desesperadamente. Pedimos que el Señor envíe el fuego ardiente del Espíritu Santo y renueve la faz de la Iglesia y del mundo. Oh, San José, ruega incesantemente por la Iglesia en este tiempo de duelos y sufrimiento. Que este dolor actual infligido a la Iglesia sea transformado por el poder de la cruz de Cristo y conduzca a una renovación y purificación continua. Amen.

—Pedro de la Cruz, ajustado ©2018

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Novena to St Joseph from Sept 6-14, 2018 at 6:00 pm. This novena to St Joseph will include: The Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, and Prayers to St Joseph. We will start on Thursday, Sept 6, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Church. On September 14, we will have Holy Hour with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as usual from 12-5:00pm to pray for the victims of abuse and scandal, and for the reform of the Church. We will conclude with a Holy Mass and Veneration of the Cross at 5:30 pm.
The similarities as well as the differences between the external senses of seeing and hearing, as compared to the internal faculty of knowing and obeying the message of Christ - is the key to understanding today’s Gospel of Mark’s use of the many healing miracles of Jesus. Mark wrote to a community of believers under persecution. In such a situation, speaking up for Christ was a very dangerous thing. It could actually cost your own life!

The story of the deaf-mute in Mark’s gospel today is apparently aimed at those members of his community who could not bear witness to Jesus, because they would not hear his word (they listen but they do not hear, which I call selective hearing). Because they are deaf to the Words of Jesus, then they have a speech impediment in speaking about Jesus. There is, therefore, a parallel between the deaf-mute in today’s gospel, and the disciples of Jesus (which is also all of us). The man in the gospel today, can neither hear nor speak properly. Similarly, the disciples cannot understand the message of Jesus, and this constitutes an impediment in their proclamation. They, too, (like us) need healing...

Let us take a close look now at the healing process that Jesus did to the deaf-mute man.

Why did Jesus take the deaf man away from the crowd? And why did he have to go into such a detailed and graphic healing process, when he could simply have said a word and the man would be completely healed! Obviously, Mark is saying something to his readers. By taking the deaf man far away from the crowd in order to heal him, Mark is saying to them that in order to be healed of their deafness to the Word of God, they need to distance themselves from the crowded world of human activity and hardships around them. The healing encounter with Jesus happens in the private intimacy of one’s heart and that of their small Christian community. Remember that Christians back then, were a very small minority and their meetings didn’t take place in big churches but in the private homes of their members.

This healing is very different from the healing of the Canaanite woman’s daughter which preceded it. In that story, Jesus did not take any other action than to announce the healing to the Canaanite woman’s daughter (Mk. 7:24-30) But, in this case, Jesus goes into an elaborate ritual in seven acts:

1. He takes the man aside.
2. He puts his fingers into the man’s ears.
3. He spits and
4. touches the man’s tongue.
5. He looks up to heaven and
6. he groaned.
7. He issues the healing command, “Ephphatha”, which is the Aramaic word for “be opened.”

[Same term used for infant baptism at the prayers over the ears and mouth and Ephphatha, when the priest or deacon says: “The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father. Amen]

So, why does Jesus go into all this? More importantly, why does Mark record all this?

Most likely, Mark’s church was beginning to develop their rituals of anointing and the use of special formulas. In that case, this was a way of saying to the readers that by participating in these early liturgical ceremonies they would also experience healing. And then, after one has experienced this healing, nothing on earth could stop them from proclaiming Jesus, even in the unlikely circumstance that Jesus himself would ask them to keep silent.

My dear sisters and brothers, the challenge of today’s Gospel to all of us then is this:

Do we realize that we are sometimes deaf? Does it occur to us that, as individuals and as church, we do not yet fully understand the message of Jesus Christ? Is that not the reason why sometimes have a speech impediment, and the people of our time no longer understand us, when we try to tell the Good News - the Gospel of the Lord?

As individuals and as a church when we approach the table of the Lord, we need to come to Jesus for healing. And this can all happen right here, far from the crowded world of human activity and turmoil, right here at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, right here in this Community of our Eucharistic celebration.

AMEN!!!

—Deacon Albert Dizon
**INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

**SAT** 9/8
4:30 Toby & Joe Eugenio Trujillo

**SUN** 9/9
7:00 Ernest Fio
8:30 McLoughlin & Fio Families
10:30 Ernest Easterday
12:30 Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish

**MON** 9/10
7:00 Mary Arnold

**TUE** 9/11
8:00 Louis & Rose Delchini

**WED** 9/12
8:00 Paul Battaglia—World Trade Ctr

**FRI** 9/14
8:00 Ray Martellacci

**SAT** 9/15
8:00 Joe Gomes
4:30 Walter & Michael Narodzonek
7:00 Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish
8:30 Thomas & Eva Hernandez & Family
10:30 Reynaldo Lejano
12:30 Joe & Dolores Cardenas

**SUN** 9/16

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**WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE**

**Sunday, 9/9**
- 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
  - 8:00 AM PH Hospitality—ICF Hosts
  - 3:45 PM PCL Confirmation Preparation Class
  - 6:00 PM PCL Youth Group Meeting

**Monday, 9/10**
- St. Finian, pray for us
  - 6:30 PM PCL Respect Life Ministry Meeting
  - 6:30 PM PC Ignite Scripture Study with Clergy

**Tuesday, 9/11**
- St. Daniel, pray for us
  - 5:00 PM CH Choir Workshop
  - 6:00 PM CH Choir Rehearsal

**Wednesday, 9/12**
- St. Albhe, pray for us
  - 9:30 AM PC Office Closed—Staff Meeting
  - 6:30 PM PCL Legion of Mary Meeting
  - 7:30 PM CH Choir Rehearsal

**Thursday, 9/13**
- St. John Chrysotom, pray for us
  - 7:00 PM CH Lectors Meeting
  - 7:30 PM PH Knights of Columbus Meeting

**Friday, 9/14**
- St. Maximillian Kolbe, pray for us
  - 12:00 PM CH Adoration
  - 5:00 PM CH Benediction

**Saturday, 9/15**
- St. Valerian, pray for us
  - 9:30 AM PCL SVdP Food Distribution
  - 10:00 AM CH Quinceanera
  - 12:30 AM CH Quinceanera
  - 3:00 PM CH Reconciliation

**Sunday, 9/16**
- 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
  - Catechetical Sunday
  - 8:00 AM PH Pancake Breakfast—Scouts serve
  - 8:30 AM CH Commissioning of Catechists
  - 2:30 PM CH Baptisms

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**ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA**

**AUCTION ~ SAT, FEB 23, 2019**

**GOLF TOURNAMENT~SAT, MAR 30, 2019**

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**PARISH STEWARDSHIP**

**SEPTEMBER 2, 2018 CONTRIBUTIONS**

Contributions for Sunday, SEP 2 will appear next week as they were not yet collected when this bulletin went to print.

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**SAN LORENZO RUIZ COMMUNITY 9 DAY-NOVENA & FIESTA**

**BEGINS**
- Day 1 Thursday SEP 20, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 2 Friday SEP 21, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 3 Saturday SEP 22, 6:00 pm Prayer Service
- Day 4 Sunday SEP 23, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 5 Monday SEP 24, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 6 Tuesday SEP 25, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 7 Wednesday SEP 26, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 8 Thursday SEP 27, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 9 Friday SEP 28, 5:15 pm Prayer Service

**FREE**
- Day 7 Wednesday SEP 26, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 8 Thursday SEP 27, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 9 Friday SEP 28, 5:15 pm Prayer Service

**CONTINUES**
- SAT, SEP 29, 4:30 PM COMMUNITY MASS
- procession into Mass with San Lorenzo Ruiz statue
- FOLLOWED BY: Light FREE Dinner with Raffle

**“THE BIG LA BOCCE 2016!”**

Sat, September 22, 11 am to 3 pm

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register at www.svdp-cc.org or b.hunt@svdp-cc.org

Includes light breakfast, lunch, beverages, silent auction, raffle & a minimum 3 games per team. Practice begins at 10:30 am

St. Catherine of Siena IGNITE team is offering an eight-week bible study by Jeff Cavins and Sarah Christmyer with two opportunities to participate: either on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:15 PM beginning OCT 10 or Saturday mornings from 11 AM to 12:30 PM beginning OCT 13. Register now with Carolyn Susin @ 925-408-5496. Workbook is $19.95 + shipping.
When I visited UC Berkeley earlier this year and met with a large group of Catholic students for a discussion, the first questions they asked me was “what do I tell my Catholic friend who no longer practices his faith because of the scandals in the Church?”

Many Catholics have had their faith shaken by the recent revelations in Pennsylvania, the scandalous behavior of an American Cardinal and the recent letter from the former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States.

Here’s how I answered the students. When the famous English theologian and academic John Henry Newman converted to the Catholic faith in 1845, his closest Anglican friends asked him “How can you join a Church which has such a history of corruption?” He responded that the Church is a Divine institution in human hands.

And, humans are sinners. He also said that Christ himself knew there would be sin and corruption in the Church, therefore, he purposefully chose Judas Iscariot as one of his apostles. So, we can trace corruption right back to the origin, yet also show that “Where sin prevails, grace prevails all the more.” Christ also preached the parable of the wheat and weeds, to show that both would exist in the Church. Yet, that’s not the end of the story. Christ has destroyed sin, and death.

I also told the students that I’ve been in the Navy Reserve for 27 years. Every year about 50 admirals, generals and commanding officers of ships and bases are removed for misbehavior, ethical violations criminal activity or “loss of confidence in ability to command.” Yet, we do not dismiss all commanders as criminal. One of my duties as chaplain is to visit the brig: the “jail” on a ship or Navy base.

Many of the prisoners are serving sentences for child abuse in their own families. Yet, we do not say all sailors and Marines are abusers. We don’t say the Navy and Marine Corps is evil. No. We point out that the majority of sailors and Marines, and soldiers and airmen, are good and loyally serve our country every day; putting their lives on the line in many instances. In addition, we have real heroes in the military and recognize them with the Congressional Medal of Honor. So, too, in the Church. The majority of our priests serve you faithful every day in every parish in our dioceses. We have heroes in the Church we call saints: like Mother Teresa and St. John Paul II.

There is no excuse for the priests who have committed crimes against innocent children. There is no excuse for bishops who have covered up these crimes or abetted them by transferring abusers to other parishes. This is evil. The difference between the military and the church is that the military has a good accountability system. The Church does not. And, we need to fix that now.

I endorse the call of Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the US Bishops, to the Holy Father to establish an independent, lay-led review board that will address complaints against bishops. In regards to the scandal of Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick and the revelations of Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, we need such a board or commission to find the truth. Perhaps this could be the existing National Review Board. Whatever group is set-up, it needs to find out “who knew what, and when did they know it?”

They need access to all the relevant documents, most of which are protected as “papal secrets.” They need to interview priests who worked in the Roman Curia and US Diocesan offices, who also would be released from the “papal secret” and allowed to testify.

We need to find out the truth. Only the truth will set us free. And, only the pope can authorize the steps that need to be taken to find the truth. But there is action I can take as bishop of our diocese.

In Oakland, I am calling for an independent outside audit of our Diocesan Review Board policies, to ensure we are faithfully following the precepts of the Dallas Charter, the procedures to investigate sexual abuse by clergy. I also am going to review the membership of the current Diocesan Review Board to make sure it has the number of lay experts we need in the fields of law enforcement, the judiciary, parents, a clinical professional specializing in treatment of childhood trauma and survivors.

In addition to these actions, I am inviting all priests, religious and lay faithful of the diocese to join me in a Novena to St. Joseph, patron of the Universal Church, from September 6-14. We will distribute a Novena prayer to be read at all Masses every day. On September 14th, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, I call all of us in the diocese to a Day of Prayer, Penance and Reparation for the sins members of the church have committed against innocent children.

I ask our priest to hold a Holy Hour with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in each parish at a convenient time, to pray in reparation, for healing for the victims, and for the cleansing and reform of the Church and her ministers. I invite us all to do penance that day, especially my brother priests: fast and make other personal sacrifices in reparation for the pain suffered by the innocent. As Pope Francis said in his “Letter to the People of God:” “The penitential dimension of fasting and prayer will help us as God’s people to come before the Lord and our wounded brothers and sisters as sinners imploiring forgiveness and the grace of shame and conversion.”

In addition, I have been receiving many letters and emails asking me to stand up for the truth and not be afraid to speak out in front of all the bishops on the need for reform. May I also ask you to pray for this intention in the novena and day of reparation? On the Feast of the Holy Cross, we will stand with Mary at the foot of her son’s cross, so that we can grow in the graces of compassion, justice, prevention, reparation—and strength to reform the church.

(Spanish on next page.)
Cuando visité la Universidad de Berkeley a principios de este año y me reuní con un grupo grande de estudiantes católicos para platicar, la primera pregunta que me hicieron fue: “¿Qué le digo a mi amigo católico que ya no practica su fe debido a los escándalos en la Iglesia?”

Muchos católicos han sido sacudidos por las recientes revelaciones en Pensilvania, por el escandaloso comportamiento de un cardenal estadounidense y la carta reciente del ex Nuncio Apostólico en los Estados Unidos.

Así fue como les respondí a los estudiantes: Cuando el famoso teólogo y académico John Henry Newman se convirtió a la Fe Católica en 1845, sus amigos anglicanos más cercanos le preguntaron “¿Cómo puedes unirte a una iglesia que tiene tanta historia de corrupción?” Respondió que la Iglesia es una institución Divina en manos humanas. Y los humanos son pecadores. También les dijo que Cristo mismo sabía que habría pecado y corrupción en la iglesia, por lo tanto, eligió a propósito a Judas Iscariote como uno de sus apóstoles. De esta manera podemos rastrear la corrupción hasta el origen, pero también mostrar que “donde abunda el pecado, la gracia sobreabunda aún más”. Cristo también predicó la parábola del trigo y las cizañas, para mostrar que aunque existirían en la Iglesia. Sin embargo, ese no es el final de la historia. Cristo ha destruido el pecado y la muerte.

También les conté a los estudiantes que he estado en la Reserva de la Marina durante 27 años. Cada año, cerca de 50 almirantes, generales y comandantes de barcos y bases son retirados por mala conducta, violaciones éticas, actividades delictivas o "pérdida de confianza en la capacidad de comandar". Sin embargo, no señalamos a todos los comandantes como criminales. Uno de mis deberes como capellán es visitar el bergantín: la ‘cárcel’ en un barco o base naval. Muchos de los presos cumplen condenas por abuso infantil en sus propias familias. Aún así, no decimos que todos los marineros y oficiales son abusadores. No decimos que la Marina y el Cuerpo de Marines son malvados. No. Sabemos que la mayoría de marineros, Marines, soldados y aviadores, son buenos y sirven lealmente a nuestro país todos los días. Ellos ponen sus vidas en peligro en muchas situaciones. Mas aún, tenemos héroes reales en el ejército y los reconocemos con la Medalla de Honor del Congreso.

De igual manera en la Iglesia. La mayoría de nuestros sacerdotes les sirven fielmente todos los días en cada parroquia de nuestras diócesis. Tenemos héroes en la Iglesia que llamamos santos: como la Madre Teresa y San Juan Pablo II. No hay excusa para los sacerdotes que han cometido crímenes contra niños inocentes. No hay excusa para los obispos que han encubierto estos crímenes o se han convertido en cómplices transfiriendo abusadores a otras parroquias. Esto es malvado.

La diferencia entre el ejército y la Iglesia es que el ejército tiene un buen sistema de rendición de cuentas. La Iglesia no. Y los humanos son pecadores. También les dijo que Cristo mismo sabía que habría pecado y corrupción en la iglesia, por lo tanto, eligió a propósito a Judas Iscariote como uno de sus apóstoles. De esta manera podemos rastrear la corrupción hasta el origen, pero también mostrar que “donde abunda el pecado, la gracia sobreabunda aún más”. Cristo también predicó la parábola del trigo y las cizañas, para mostrar que aunque existirían en la Iglesia. Sin embargo, ese no es el final de la historia. Cristo ha destruido el pecado y la muerte.

Pero si hay una acción que yo puedo tomar como Obispo de nuestra diócesis.

En Oakland hago un llamado para una auditoría externa e independiente de nuestras políticas diocesanas de la junta de revisión, para asegurarnos que estamos siguiendo fielmente los preceptos de la Carta de Dallas. También voy a revisar la configuración de la actual Junta de Revisión Diocesana para asegurarme de que cuenta con la cantidad de expertos laicos que necesitamos en materia policial y legal, padres de familia, un profesional especializado en el tratamiento clínico de traumatismo infantil y representantes de los sobrevivientes al abuso.

En conjunto con estas acciones, invito a todos los sacerdotes, religiosos y fieles de la diócesis a que unan a mi a una Novena a San José, patrono de la Iglesia Universal, del 6 de septiembre al 14 de septiembre. Distribuiremos una oración de Novena para ser leída en todas las Misas todos los días. El viernes 14, la Fiesta de la Exaltación de la Santa Cruz, hago un llamado a que todos en la diócesis hagamos un día de Oración, Penitencia y Reparación por los pecados que los miembros de la iglesia han cometido contra niños inocentes. Pido a nuestros sacerdotes que tengan una Hora Santa con la Exposición del Santísimo Sacramento en cada parroquia a la hora conveniente, que oren en reparación, por la sanación de las víctimas y por la purificación y reforma de la iglesia y sus ministros. Los invito a que juntos hagamos penitencia ese día, especialmente a mis hermanos sacerdotes: ayunar y hacer otros sacrificios personales en reparación por el dolor que sufren los inocentes. Como dijo el Papa Francisco en su “Carta al pueblo de Dios”: “La dimensión penitencial del ayuno y la oración nos ayudará como Pueblo de Dios a comparecer ante el Señor y nuestros hermanos heridos, como pecadores implorando el perdón y la gracia de la vergüenza y conversión.”

Adicionalmente, he estado recibiendo muchas cartas y correos electrónicos pidiéndome que haga claro mi compromiso por la verdad y que no tenga miedo de hablar frente a todos los obispos sobre la necesidad de reforma. ¿Puedo también pedirles que oren por esta intención en la novena y el día de la reparación? En la Fiesta de la Exaltación de la Santa Cruz, estaremos de pie con María al pie de la cruz de su hijo, para que podamos crecer en las gracias de la compasión, la justicia, la prevención, la reparación, y la fuerza para reformar la Iglesia.
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### READINGS & REFLECTIONS FOR THE WEEK

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT, SEP 9</td>
<td>FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Unbroken chain</td>
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<td>It's hard to see past appearances. Some creatures are just better looking, whatever it's a specimen of tree or flower, fish or bird, or human being. And the lovelier the view, the more it attracts us. The trouble with such distinctions is not in the eye of the beholder, of course, but rather in the heart. Do we value children according to a scale of cuteness or cleverness? Do we choose friends based on zip codes or celebrity? Do we give our attention to the person wearing trendier labels? Put on your kingdom glasses and reverse your instinctive attraction today. Today's readings: Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-5; Mark 7:31-37 (128). “Have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?”</td>
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<td>MON, SEP 10</td>
<td>Your name here</td>
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<td>For Jews, the days starting with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur are known as the Days of Awe or the Days of Repentance. On Rosh Hashanah, meaning the “Head of the Year” or “First of the Year,” it is said God writes down who will live and who will die, and who will have a good or bad year. But what people do during the Days of Awe can change God’s decision, which God seals in a book on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Jesus says that to inherit eternal life, to have your name written in the Book of Life, you must love God with all your being and your neighbor as yourself. Take a page from this Jewish holy season and look back on the past year, especially what you need to change. Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Luke 6:6-11 (437). “I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?”</td>
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<td>TUE, SEP 11</td>
<td>Decisions, decisions</td>
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<td>If you examine the key choices Jesus made in his life, you’ll note that before he made them he spent time alone in prayer—often for a good deal of time. Decision-making is never easy, especially when the stakes are high. If Jesus turned to quiet time in prayer at such moments, should we settle for anything less in our own lives? Make sure you take the time you need—and pray for God’s guidance—when faced with a big decision. Then you will be able to move forward with trust and confidence once you have made your choice. Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; Luke 6:12-19 (438). “Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.”</td>
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<td>WED, SEP 12</td>
<td>MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY A litany of reasons to praise Mary</td>
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<td>The Litany of the Blessed Virgin, in use since 1981, contains traditional elements from Mary crowning of yesteryear: familiar responses, triple entreaties. But at its heart, it seeks not only to claim but also to define Mary’s queenship. She is queen of virtues: charity, mercy, and peace. She is queen over groups: angels, prophets, and martyrs. She is queen of territories: heaven and earth. Pray her litany today. Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Luke 6:20-26 (439). “Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.”</td>
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<td>THU, SEP 13</td>
<td>MEMORIAL OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Golden words</td>
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<td>A highly educated monk and priest, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) reluctantly became bishop of Constantinople in 398. He was twice exiled for his criticism of the nobility and other bishops. He earned his name Chrysostom, Greek for “golden-mouthed,” because of his eloquence as a preacher. He spoke powerfully about worship when he once said, “What is the use of loading Christ’s table with gold cups while he himself is starving? Feed the hungry, and then if we have any money left over, spend it on the altar table. . . . What use is it to adorn the altar with cloth of gold hangings and deny Christ a coat for his back!” Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 8:1b-7, 11-13; Luke 6:27-38 (440). “From the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic.”</td>
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<td>FRI, SEP 14</td>
<td>FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS How the cross became holy</td>
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<td>Christians are an odd lot. We take what was used as an object of torture and murder—the cross of Christ—and elevate it to a holy state. Just as Christ redeemed us through his death, the cross itself is redeemed through Jesus’ saving act. We now place crosses and crucifixes around our necks, pin them to our lapels, and hang them in our homes and churches. We welcome the constant reminder of Jesus’ painful death, because it gives us comfort in our own suffering and reminds us of the promise of the Resurrection. The cross is the most universal and powerful symbol of Christianity. Draw on it regularly to give you the strength to find God in all things. Today's readings: Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638). “God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved.”</td>
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<td>SAT, SEP 15</td>
<td>MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS Her station keeping</td>
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<td>On this special feast, the church recommends chanting the words we know more familiarly as the “Stabat Mater”: “At the cross her station keeping / Stood the mourning mother weeping / Close to Jesus to the last.” Well known by the 14th century, the “Stabat Mater” was probably written by Pope Innocent III in the 12th century and popularized by the Franciscans. Its pathos has made it beloved by Catholics and Protestants alike. It is a powerful reminder that in the realm of sorrow, we have an advocate who knows our grief very well. Our Mother stands ready to share our losses. Today's readings: 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 (442); John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (639). “Without dying you won the Martyr’s crown beneath the Cross of the Lord.”</td>
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<td>SUN, SEP 16</td>
<td>TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME The answer this time</td>
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<td>We evolve. This is one of the most grateful things about existence, that we’re not required to remain stuck in our stuff. We grow, learn, and adapt through the years. Our relationship with the Holy One evolves too. So, when Jesus asks us once more—Who do you say that I am?—our reply may well be different this time. Is Jesus still the God someone gave us long ago? Has Jesus become more real and necessary: as a friend, brother, healer, teacher, fellow sufferer, or champion? Is Jesus Lord of our lives, judge, irritant, role model, or inspiration? Today's readings: Isaiah 50:5-9a; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35 (131). “And Jesus asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ ”</td>
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