

For where two or three are gathered in  
my name,  
there I am in the midst of them.  
Matthew 18

## Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time: August 7 - 13, 2011

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### The Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Elijah finds God not in the thunder and driving wind, but in a gentle breeze. We repeat the gospel we heard a few days ago as Peter's fear gets the best of him, when Jesus calls him out of his boat in a stormy sea. Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and would have perished without Jesus' rescuing him.

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Dominic, priest**. Wednesday is the **Feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr**. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Clare, virgin**.

In the first readings this week from **Deuteronomy**, we hear about the entry into the Promised Land. Moses says farewell to the people. Then we have readings from the **Book of Joshua**, who was the successor of Moses. The people cross the Jordan, with the Ark of the Covenant clearing a path through the river. Joshua speaks to the people as a prophet and recounts all God has done for them. The people renew their covenant at Shechem.

In the daily readings from **Matthew's Gospel**, Jesus again warns his disciples about his upcoming passion, death and resurrection, but they are "overwhelmed with grief." Jesus resolves the temple tax question, as if to say, "it will be given you." When the disciples are wondering about "who is the greatest," Jesus points to a child and says the greatest is the one who is humble, like the defenseless child. He tells them to care for each other "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone," and to pray together for anything they need. When Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive,

### Daily Prayer This Week

It is marvelous how each week's readings offer us new ways to open our hearts to God's grace. Sometimes, as with Monday's psalm we feel the real presence of God as we "Glorify the Lord." Like Israel, it is good for us to look back from time to time and gratefully remember all God has done for us and to renew our "Amen" to the new covenant God makes with us in Jesus.

Throughout this week, each of us can find the connection between some part of the readings and a desire, a need, a longing in our unique situation. If we begin each day - at the side of our beds, in the shower, while getting dressed, over a cup of coffee - simply talking with our Lord about our upcoming day, we will have a wonderfully reflective week. It doesn't have to be long. It just needs to be focused and focusing. That is, we need to keep uncovering something inside of us that we can talk with our Lord about, at various "in between" times during the day. Like a song that keeps playing in the back of our head all day, a desire we express in the morning will focus our day and our relationship with Jesus throughout the day. At night we can all pause to give thanks for times of connection with Jesus during the day, and the gifts God gives us.

This week, it might be Jesus' prediction of his passion, death and resurrection that unsettles us, as we realize he's calling us to follow him. It might be the battle for being the greatest that the disciples are caught up in, and that I might myself be caught up in, as I compete with and judge others. So, Jesus' words about our emulating the little, humble child can open our hearts. His call

Jesus tells the powerful parable of the servant who is forgiven his debt but doesn't forgive his debtors. Jesus urges us to forgive from our hearts. Jesus tells his disciples about the sacredness of marriage. The disciples tried to prevent people from bringing children to Jesus and he said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

God's love belongs to all of us, according to the readings of the **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. In **Isaiah**, God promises "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Paul, in his **Letter to the Romans**, tells us "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" and refers to himself as the "apostle to the Gentiles." In **Matthew's Gospel**, Jesus hears the pleas of a "foreign" woman, a Canaanite who begs Jesus to heal her daughter.

to embrace the child, the defenseless one, might allow us to pray this week about an openness to a particularly defenseless person or to hearing the cry of the poor in our city or in the world. And, who can't be opened up by the parable of the servant who doesn't forgive as he's been forgiven? Each day we might name people we struggle to forgive. We could make a focused effort to thank God for the mercy, compassion and unconditional love we've experienced, as ask for the grace to share that with others. For some of us, it will be important to spend a day or more asking for the grace to be faithful in our marriage - in all the ways that will call us to die to ourselves and think of the needs of our spouse before my own.

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