

Is a lamp brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed, and not to be placed on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden except to be made visible; nothing is secret except to come to light.
Mark 4

Third Week of Ordinary Time: Jan. 24-30, 2010

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[PDF of this Page](#)

Third Week of Ordinary Time

The **Third Sunday in Ordinary Time** begins to take us through **Luke's Gospel**. We will follow it each week until the Lent and Easter seasons begin and pick it up again when Ordinary Time returns. It introduces Jesus as returning to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit" where he goes to the synagogue and teaches from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor." He ends with the stunning words "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Monday is the **Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle**, with its own special readings. Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, bishops**. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church**.

This is the third week of readings from Samuel, this week from the **Second Book of Samuel**. A young David is anointed King of Israel and with his army, captures the city of Zion. In the festivities that followed, Samuel offers the delightful image of a joyful David at the Ark of the Covenant, "dancing before the LORD with abandon ... with shouts of joy and to the sound of the horn." The Lord tells David, "I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his Kingdom firm." David sees Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite and after having relations with her, he orders Uriah to the front of a battle where he is killed.

In **Mark's Gospel** this week, we have many familiar stories. The scribes, hearing of his many healings, accuse Jesus of being possessed by

Daily Prayer This Week

This is a week where Jesus speaks of seeds being planted and of growing. We are still at the beginning of a new year, and this is a good time to answer the call in our hearts to spend more time with Jesus, in prayer.

"I'm not very good at prayer," we might say. "I don't have the time to pray." Jesus is not waiting for us to be perfect before we talk to him - he is simply waiting, right now, for us to come to him in our own humanity. This week we are invited to uncover the light of our faith, the light that warms the longing we feel in our souls for something different or deeper in our relationship with God. At this beginning of the year, we might step back and examine the ways we talk with Jesus - and the ways we hold him at arm's length.

We are being called into a relationship, a friendship, with someone who delights in us and waits for us to release our fears and come out of hiding. Where do we start? With the desire.

It can be so simple to take the empty moments of our day and just tell the Lord what is in our hearts. In the early morning moments before we get out of bed, while in the shower or traveling to work, cooking or walking the dog - we can stop and open our hearts. "Jesus, you know what is in my heart. You know what my needs are. Help me to be

Satan. He replies that a house is divided against itself cannot stand.

Mary and other relatives arrive at a home where Jesus is teaching, but Jesus does not go to them, saying, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." He tells the parable of the sower and the seeds which fall on fertile ground and rocky soil. "Those sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." He encourages his disciples not to hide their light "under a bushel basket" and tells the story of the mustard seed, the tiniest seed which grows into one of the largest bushes. In Saturday's gospel the apostles are frightened on a boat in a storm until Jesus awakens to calm the wind and seas.

On the **Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**, **Luke's gospel** continues the story of the Jesus teaching in the synagogue. The crowd, although "amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth" began to challenge Jesus. He responds that "no prophet is accepted in his own native place" and challenges their assumptions, angering the crowd. When they try to drive him out of town, he passes through their midst.

more open to the way you are calling me in my life."

Our prayer can be as simple as opening our hands on our lap for a moment and saying in our own words, "Show me how to come out of hiding. Give me the courage to let go of my fears and bring myself to you in honesty. Let me drop the many defenses I carry that keep me from feeling how deeply you love and accept me."

There is no right or wrong way to approach Jesus - the only right thing is that we come with an open heart and our own desire for something deeper.

Every evening as we end our day, we can sit at the edge of our bed with our hands open and say, "Thank you." We can reflect on the many ways we felt the love of God in our lives that day. What tiny seed was planted in my life to bloom? Where did I shine the light of my own faith on someone?

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