



Bringing Home the Word

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

August 17, 2025

A House Divided

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

One of the heaviest burdens people are forced to carry is the distress of “a house divided.” When Abraham Lincoln said, “a house divided against itself cannot stand,” he was referring to the division within the country during the Civil War. We experience a similar, though not as lethal, separation when our two-party system of government engenders obstinate division—not merely political diversity. But perhaps the most heartbreaking example of division is a family in which members are alienated from each other.

Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 38:4–6; 8–10

“[Jeremiah] ought to be put to death. He is weakening the resolve of the soldiers...and of all the people, by saying such things to them.”

Hebrews 12:1–4

Consider how [Jesus] endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

Luke 12:49–53

[Jesus said,] “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!”

There are as many reasons for family division as there are families: the betrayal of one member by another, inheritance disparity, parental favoritism, sibling rivalry, to name a few. One might think that those involved should be able to resolve such differences—after all, isn’t blood thicker than water? But how are serious family rifts to be repaired if the reason for division is one’s faith or commitment to God? That is the situation Jesus describes today.

We might wonder how faith in God can tear families apart. It often happens when someone leaves the religion of one’s family and converts to another tradition. This might be judged as a betrayal of the family’s values. This may be what many of Jesus’ Jewish followers faced when they claimed that Jesus fulfilled their religious expectations while other family members did not share their belief. That was a terrible price to have to pay for fidelity to their faith, but they paid it. †



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A Word from Pope Leo XIV

The deepest purpose of the Church’s social doctrine [is] a contribution to peace and dialogue in the service of building bridges of universal fraternity.... [T]he Risen Lord always goes before us, even at times when injustice and death seem to prevail. Let us help one another...“build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace.”

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Are there steps I can take to heal a rift in my family or community?
- What is stopping me?



Stay Close to the Blessed Mother

Rev. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR

The story of the wedding feast at Cana has always been one of my favorite biblical stories. Although some biblical commentators suggest it should not be taken at face value, I prefer not to get caught up in those kinds of details. I interpret it as a story that speaks of the intimacy between a mother and a son. Reading it, I see in the exchange between Jesus and the Blessed Mother an illustration of their relationship.

Our Blessed Lady knew she could call upon her Son, and he would respond.

It is not primarily the knowledge of his divinity that drove her but rather her knowledge of Jesus as a person. It was Mary who had taught him what it meant to be a human person. It was at her knee that Jesus had learned about respect, obedience, and love. Mary knew her Son was a man who understood the meaning of love, what it meant to be in need, what it meant to be potentially embarrassed. She was confident in her statement: “They have no wine” (John 2:3). She was certain Jesus would respond in a way that was both right and generous, lessening the couple’s embarrassment and refocusing the guests’ attention. Mary knew Jesus, and because of that, she was able to ask.

My mother would always end conversations with the reminder, “Remember to stay close to the Blessed Mother.” When I first heard her say this, I simply wrote it off as an expression of her strong and constant devotion to Mary. Now, however, there seems to be more to unpack... Perhaps it was a reminder that many people, despite their best intentions, do not end up with lives reflective of their desires. Perhaps it is a reminder to be gentle, accepting, patient, and kind. I recall all of this when I hear the story of the wedding feast at Cana. †

From *A Guide for the Scrupulous: Spiritual Practices, Critical Beliefs, Helpful Prayers* by Rev. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR, Liguori Publications (828751). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Schedule moments for reflecting, pondering, musing, and mulling it over.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “*Quinceañera: A Celebration of Faith and Family*”

The Hispanic tradition of the *quinceañera* is just one of many faith traditions contributed by one of the ethnic groups that is part of the mosaic of America. The word *quinceañera* (pronounced keen-seh-ahn-YEHR-ah) comes from the Spanish word *quince* (“fifteen”). It is the ceremony for a Latina girl at the age of fifteen (*quince años*) that marks her transition to adulthood. The celebration is rich in both religious and cultural elements. Its origin in our hemisphere goes back to the Indigenous people whose cultures had various rites of passage for girls passing into womanhood. The Spanish missionaries, when they began evangelizing the Indigenous peoples, borrowed regional cultural customs to help teach the faith.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. Liguori.org • 800-325-9521



Saving God, when the world is frightening, when we worry about those we love, help us to remember that you love them even more. We pray always in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 18–23

Monday, Weekday:

Jgs 2:11–19 / Mt 19:16–22

Tuesday, Weekday:

Jgs 6:11–24a / Mt 19:23–30

Wednesday, St. Bernard:

Jgs 9:6–15 / Mt 20:1–16

Thursday, St. Pius X:


Jgs 11:29–39a / Mt 22:1–14

Friday, Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Ru 1:1, 3–6, 14b–16, 22 / Mt 22:34–40

Saturday, Weekday:

Ru 2:1–3, 8–11; 4:13–17 / Mt 23:1–12

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