



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
August 24, 2025

Membership Is Not Enough

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Just because you belong to a tennis club does not mean you can play tennis. This might sound like a ridiculous statement. Still, it is important to acknowledge that joining a group and paying dues does not mean that you are an active member. Something similar unfolds in the story that Jesus tells in today's gospel passage. The people who have been locked out claim to be known by the householder: "We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets" (Luke 13:26). That may have been true, but evidently

it was not enough. As he tells this story, Jesus is making a point for the sake of his listeners: "Enjoying my company and listening to me is not enough." Then, what is enough?

Returning to tennis, it is not enough to join a club or even to read a book about tennis. You must play it. For many of us, this would mean a lifelong attempt at trying to learn and perfect our game. But then, that is why one joins a tennis club. Christianity is a way of life; we must live it. This is not to say that doctrines and rituals are unimportant. They are very important, but they are important because they inform and then celebrate the Christian life we live. Here too, it might take a lifetime to learn being a Christian. But then, that is why one is a member of the Church—an *active member*. †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 66:18–21

[Thus says the Lord,] "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; they shall come and see my glory."

Hebrews 12:5–7, 11–13

Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines.

Luke 13:22–30

[Jesus said,] "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."



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A Word from Pope Leo XIV

Peace is first and foremost a gift. It is the first gift of Christ: "My peace I give to you" (John 14:27)... It engages and challenges each of us...demanding first of all that we work on ourselves. Peace is built...by eliminating pride and vindictiveness and carefully choosing our words. For words, too, not only weapons, can wound and even kill.

ADDRESS TO MEMBERS
OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
ROME, MAY 16, 2025



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I have a desire to live a more authentic Christian life?
- To do so, what changes do I need to make?



Some Assembly Required

Rev. Lawrence E. Mick

The first thing necessary for any liturgy is the assembly of the faithful. Liturgy is, by its very nature, a communal activity, so it requires people to come together with the intention of worshipping together. This is not as simple as it first may seem, especially in our consumer culture, where we tend to approach liturgy as a product we consume rather than as an activity that we help to create. Many people think of the liturgy as something provided by the priest and the other liturgical ministers, and they then decide if they want to “buy” it or not.

Linked to this consumer mentality is our sense of individual rights and preferences. Our culture, perhaps more than any other in history, has exalted the individual above the community or society. While this certainly has many beneficial results in our respect for the rights of the individual, there are also negative effects when it becomes too dominant. The American mythos exalts the Lone Ranger, the self-made men or women, the ones who pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, etc. We are less aware of the vital importance of the community in making and keeping us human and happy. As a result, many people find it difficult to relinquish their individual preferences for the sake of being part of and acting as a community. Any communal activity requires such subsuming of the self into the group, whether it is a sports team trying for victory or a group of farmers at a barn raising. Can you imagine the shape of the barn if every person in the group insisted on doing it his or her own way? In worship, too, we are invited to be part of one communal act, which means none of us really gets to have our own way with it. An assembly is made up of individuals who have agreed to become part of something larger than themselves. †

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Adapted From *How We Worship: The Eucharist, the Sacraments, and the Hours* by Rev. Lawrence E. Mick, Liguori Publications (819360). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From “Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace” by Most Reverend John C. Wester

When I was installed as the twelfth archbishop of Santa Fe, I never imagined I would publish a pastoral letter on nuclear disarmament. I had not thought about nuclear weapons since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when I was twelve years old. Since then, I was like most Americans, lulled into...believing the arms race ended when the Cold War did... Nonetheless, in January 2022, I issued *Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament*. It occurs to me now that this letter is indeed about social justice and is quite spiritual—it is about the sanctity of human life, accepting responsibility as stewards of God’s creation, and protecting the common good in a most fundamental way.

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



Faithful God, grant me the grace to believe the truth, to speak what I believe, and to live what I speak. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 25–30

Monday, Weekday:
1 Thes 1:1–5, 8b–10 / Mt 23:13–22
Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Thes 2:1–8 / Mt 23:23–26
Wednesday, St. Monica:
1 Thes 2:9–13 / Mt 23:27–32

Thursday, St. Augustine:
1 Thes 3:7–13 / Mt 24:42–51
Friday, Passion of St. John the Baptist:
1 Thes 4:1–8 / Mk 6:17–29
Saturday, Weekday:
1 Thes 4:9–11 / Mt 25:14–30