

Sunday, Jul 20, 2025

Sit for a spell

As essentially Christian and counter-intuitive as “love your enemies may be,” Jesus’ defending Mary’s “laziness” over her hard-working sister Martha seems even more outrageous and unfair! If Americans love and believe in anything, it is hard work. It’s what gives us identity. We define ourselves as a farmer, an attorney, a salesperson, and so on. So how can Jesus tell poor Martha, who could use a little help in the kitchen, that her sister has chosen the “better part”? Well, it’s a matter of priority. We can imagine Jesus saying, “Martha, I came to visit you, not your cuisine. I know you show love by your hard work, but you mean so much more to me than what you do. Come sit here with me.”

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Genesis 18:1-10a; Colossians 1:24-28; Luke 10:38-42 (108).

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing.”

Monday, Jul 21, 2025

Begin a conversation with scripture

Sacred scripture is the living word of God, and the ancient monastic practice of *lectio divina* (Latin for “divine reading”) is a contemplative way of “conversing” with it. By narrowing in on certain passages, reading them slowly and repeatedly, noticing what stirs you, and reflecting prayerfully on it, you can grow closer in personal relationship with God. *Open Heart, Open Mind* by Trappist monk Father Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. is a modern classic on the topic. Keating says the intention of the practice is nothing less than union with God. “When the presence of God emerges from our inmost being into our faculties, whether we walk down the street or drink a cup of soup, divine life is pouring into the world.” That’s a worthy life goal to set for ourselves.

Exodus 14:5-18; Matthew 12:38-42 (395). *“There is something greater than Solomon here.”*

Tuesday, Jul 22, 2025

Recommit to friendship

We seem to be coming closer to understanding Mary Magdalene as she was, not the reformed sinner (a role mistakenly ascribed to her first not in scripture but by Pope Gregory I in 591) but, as the Mass prayers and readings for her feast day remind us, the beloved friend of Jesus, the first witness of his Resurrection, and its first missionary. All the prayers in the Mass in her honor praise her memory as a close friend of Jesus, much like the Beloved Disciple in John’s gospel. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux says it is Magdalene’s “loving audacity that charms the Heart of Jesus.” We can celebrate Mary Magdalene by recommitting ourselves to our own audacious love for Jesus and our treasured friends.

FEAST OF MARY MAGDALENE

Song of Songs 3:1-4b; John 20:1-2, 11-18 (603). *“Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord.’”*

Wednesday, Jul 23, 2025

Stories for the ages

Good preachers know that if they tell a story as part of a sermon, their listeners are more likely to remember the message. Such preachers take their lead from the master storyteller. Jesus used stories to help people understand what really matters in the divine life. Indeed, says 20th-century Catholic historian Father Edmund Campion, Catholics are born storytellers “who get their identity through their histories, which they see as salvation history linking

them to the saving actions of Christ.” What stories from your life link back to Christ? Think about how your actions will contribute to salvation history.

Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15; Matthew 13:1-9 (397). *“But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit.”*

Thursday, Jul 24, 2025

Shake it up

The routine nature of daily life can cause our hearts to grow dull. And when we’re feeling dull, it’s hard to hear what God has to tell us. Yet it doesn’t take much to shake things up and get a new perspective. Just break out of a routine and do something different—take a new route to work, rearrange your furniture, clean out a junk drawer, or call an old friend you’ve been thinking about. God often talks to us in moments of surprise. “Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor,” says Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. “Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry, and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.” So get out of your rut and you might even get a fresh message from God.

Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b; Matthew 13:10-17 (398). *“Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears.”*

Friday, Jul 25, 2025

Forward and upward

Legend has it that Saint James was preaching the gospel in Spain when the Virgin Mary appeared to him and called him back to Judea, where he was beheaded by King Agrippa. His remains were then taken up and brought back to Spain, where they were buried at Compostela. A shrine to James was established there in the ninth century, and the Camino (Way) of Saint James to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela became one of the most important pilgrimages in the world next to Jerusalem and Rome. In medieval times pilgrims along the Camino would say in a call and response to one another, “*Ultreia et suseia*,” meaning “forward and upward” as a show of strength and encouragement to continue the journey. Draw on the strength and hope of centuries of Christian pilgrims to continue your journey of faith.

FEAST OF JAMES, APOSTLE

2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28 (605). *“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.”*

Saturday, Jul 26, 2025

Pass it on

We know nothing for certain about the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it doesn’t matter. In the same way that we know God through his Son Jesus, we can know Anne and Joachim through their daughter Mary. It was through these two that Mary learned about prayer and work, family and community. It was Anne and Joachim who taught their daughter to love and trust God enough to say, “May it be done to me according to your word.” Faith, like the color of our eyes and hair, is passed down from generation to generation. Today may we remember that our words and actions will continue to reverberate for generations to come. Let us speak and act accordingly.

MEMORIAL OF JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Exodus 24:3-8; Matthew 13:24-30 (400). *“All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do.”*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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