

Sunday, Aug 24, 2025

The only way to make an impression on God

A teacher asked his class for examples of words that describe the current crop of college students. He expected to hear “highly educated” or “sophisticated” but was surprised at the honesty of a young woman who responded “entitlement. We think everything is owed to us.” An overstatement, yet such an attitude can often be attached to a particular social class, race, gender, ethnicity, or nationality. But scripture makes it clear that simply being a member of a chosen race or having rank upon rank of wealthy, noble, or accomplished ancestors makes no impression on God. Only one thing does: goodness.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 66:18-21; Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13; Luke 13:22-30 (123).

“They shall proclaim my glory among the nations.”

Monday, Aug 25, 2025

Of icons and idols

The First Council of Nicaea, convened on this day in 325, condemned the Arian heresy and affirmed both the divinity of Christ and the Trinitarian nature of God through the Nicene Creed. Four centuries later, the Second Council of Nicaea addressed the Iconoclastic Controversy, condemning the destruction of religious images. The council affirmed the legitimacy of displaying and venerating icons as a way to connect with Christ and the saints, while carefully distinguishing between *veneration*, which honors the person represented, and *worship*, which belongs to God alone. These ancient debates—about who God is and how we approach the divine—echo throughout salvation history. Idolatry, the act of placing anything above God, remains a constant temptation. Consider using religious art as you take time to examine your own life. What false idols might stand between you and God?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10; Matthew 23:13-22 (425). *“Blind fools, which is greater, the gold, or the temple that made the gold sacred?”*

Tuesday, Aug 26, 2025

Duty to imitate

To share the gospel is to share a part of yourself. Your life experience brings the word of God to life. We are the living word—witnesses to the gospel in our everyday actions. When you share yourself with others through acts of love, the gospel becomes more real—not only for those you encounter, but for you as well. As Saint Augustine reminds us: “It is the highest duty of religion to imitate Him whom you adore.”

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 23:23-26 (426). *“We were determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our very selves as well.”*

Wednesday, Aug 27, 2025

In her own words

In the early centuries of the church, women’s importance was often tied to the social standing of the men in their lives, and their stories were told through a male voice. Saint Monica’s story comes to us through the writings of her son, Saint Augustine of Hippo. He described Monica as a model of womanly virtue: hard working, persevering, submissive, and holy. Yet we know nothing about Monica in her own words. We do not even know if she could write. Monica, like many women, past and present, lacked the social power to speak for themselves. Perhaps today we can

entrust to her saintly patronage all the people who struggle to find—or to be heard in—their own voice.

MEMORIAL OF MONICA

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:27-32 (427). *“You received it not as the word of men, but as it truly is, the word of God.”*

Thursday, Aug 28, 2025

Be inspired by a good book

Looking for a good book? Try Augustine’s *Confessions*, a classic of literature by one of the greatest thinkers of all time. Augustine’s account of his search for God contains all the elements of a great adventure story: exotic locations, decadence and dissolution, complicated maternal relationship, philosophical and theological struggles, despair and confusion, and finally a profound religious experience: “No further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.” Augustine’s search for the only source of true peace is our search, too. “You have made us for yourself, O Lord,” he wrote, “and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

1 Thessalonians 3:7-13; Matthew 24:42-51 (428). *“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love.”*

Friday, Aug 29, 2025

Sin doesn’t get the last word

We tend to divide up people into good guys and bad guys. Yet the truth about any given person defies those categories. Just think if you were to be permanently judged and labeled based on a particularly bad day when all your weak points showed up like yellow dandelions on a green lawn. Take Herod for instance, one of the villains of the gospel stories. Despite his bad behavior, Mark presents him as having a heart with at least a reasonable potential for goodness. As *Just Mercy* author Bryan Stevenson says, “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.” And our Christian faith teaches that everyone is worthy of our compassion. Indeed, as Jesus said in one of Saint Faustina’s visions: “The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to my mercy.”

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Mark 6:17-29 (429/634). *“God did not call us to impurity but to holiness.”*

Saturday, Aug 30, 2025

A prayer that speaks to all

Saturdays are not only the traditional day to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary but also the day of the week to pray the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, the preeminent “Marian” prayer. In prayerfully meditating on the events of the Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary, the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the Birth of Jesus, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple, we “weave our intentions, thoughts, imagination, emotions, and desire for union with Christ,” says Alice Camille in her award-winning article for VISION Vocation Network, “[Full of grace: Reclaiming the Rosary](#).” The Rosary is a prayer that speaks to everyone as the church but also to each person as an individual. What is it saying to you today?

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

1 Thessalonians 4:9-11; Matthew 25:14-30 (430). *“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”*

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



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