

## Sunday, Sep 07, 2025

### Don't hold back

Do we recognize the Jesus who says, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, he cannot be my disciple"? The words seem harsh in comparison to the soothing invitation of the Good Shepherd. Not to worry—Jesus is not insisting we abandon family or become homeless in order to follow him. But Jesus is saying, without doubt, that nothing—no thing and no one—can become so central in life that it interferes with doing God's will to love God and love your neighbor as yourself by being just, showing mercy, and walking with God. Jesus' call is "do as I do. Love as I love, hold nothing back. Do this in remembrance of me."

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wisdom 9:13-18b; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14:25-33 (129).

*"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."*

## Monday, Sep 08, 2025

### Set your sights on love

Disappointments come in all varieties: in finance, romance, parenting, and professional fulfillment. Some of us dream big dreams only to reap what seem humble returns. Should we set our sights lower, then, to keep disappointment at bay? For his part Saint Paul does recommend an attitude adjustment: Aim for love. Those who orient their actions and intentions toward love of God will not be disappointed because God is glad to employ all things, successes and failures together, to fulfill divine purposes. Just ask Saints Joachim and Anne, aged parents of a late-arriving child soon to be called "full of grace."

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Micah 5:1-4a or Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23 or 1:18-23 (636). *"We know that all things work for good for those who love God."*

## Tuesday, Sep 09, 2025

### The secret lives of Christians

The Spanish Jesuit priest Saint Peter Claver spent 40 years ministering to African slaves arriving in the port of Cartagena, in what is now Colombia. Many thought he was wasting his time and even opposed his work with people whose welfare was almost entirely neglected. In the last few years of his life, Peter himself was nearly forgotten, having become ill and confined to his room. Yet his death in 1654 prodded the city into the realization they had lost a saint. Even if your efforts to help others go unnoticed or unappreciated—the beneficiaries of your goodwill will know you through your works as will God.

MEMORIAL OF PETER CLAVER, PRIEST

Colossians 2:6-15; Luke 6:12-19 (438). *"He brought you to life along with him."*

## Wednesday, Sep 10, 2025

### Take a good hard look

What's not to love about the Beatitudes? Each is a source of hope in the midst of the joys and sorrows of everyday life. But then there's that curious part that follows that begins with those fateful words, "Woe to you," and that's about the time we decide God is taking on all those "evildoers" out there. It's difficult to hear these words of admonishment addressed to us, yet we must take them to

heart and see them as calling us to life. Joan of Arc offers a good prayer for these moments of uncertainty: "If I am in God's grace, may he keep me there. If I am not, may he put me there."

Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 6:20-26 (439). *"You have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed."*

## Thursday, Sep 11, 2025

### You are what you wear

Clothing has a dual purpose: to protect the body from harsh weather and to adorn and identify ourselves: the business suit of an executive, the jeans of a teenager, the uniform of a soldier. In that respect, it makes sense that Saint Paul says we should "put on" virtue; we should wear compassion, kindness, patience, gentleness as colorfully and obviously as we wear our outfits. Paul wants us to wear our allegiance to Christ "on our sleeves" if you will. The Christian display is not meant as a boast like a Gucci or Prada logo, but as a simple, humble sign that the wearer belongs to Christ, and is thus cloaked in love.

Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 6:27-38 (440). *"Over all these put on love."*

## Friday, Sep 12, 2025

### Set a good example

Remember that moment when you first realized: "Oh, my gosh, I'm becoming my mother!"—or your father or whoever it was staring back at you from the mirror of your life? We do tend to grow up to become like our elders in many ways, whether we like it or not. Indeed, we put a lot of time and effort into trying to mold young people. Yet, if the above is true, we ought to spend more energy molding and shaping ourselves to be worthy of emulation. That way, when the student becomes like the teacher, we will have made some progress. Remember, says Pope Benedict XVI, "a witness of Christ does not merely transmit information but, through the coherency of his own life, becomes a dependable reference point."

1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14; Luke 6:39-42 (441). *"No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher."*

## Saturday, Sep 13, 2025

### Simple words of wisdom

A gifted preacher gains a great following. Take the Early Church Father John Chrysostom (347-407) for example. Because of his eloquence, he was given the surname *chrysostomos*, meaning "golden mouthed," and his sermons are still studied and quoted today. What gave his words such power? It is said he avoided flowery language and complex images; instead, he spoke simply and plainly and applied biblical lessons to everyday life. Here's one sweet example: "The bee is more honored than other animals, not because she labors, but because she labors for others." Gifted preaching changes hearts and lives. The next time you hear such preaching, let the one who delivered it know you appreciate the effort that went into preparing it.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 1:15-17; Luke 6:43-49 (442). *"I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, listens to my words, and acts on them."*

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



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