Home Edition

Praying at Home

ST. STEVEN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

"The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." - Mt 13:43a

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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SUNDAY'S READINGS

FIRST READING:
For your might is the source of justice;
your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.
(Wis 12:16)

PSALM:
Lord, you are good and forgiving. (Ps 86)

SECOND READING:
And the one who searches hearts
knows what is the intention of the Spirit,
because it intercedes for the holy ones
according to God's will. (Rom 8:27)

GOSPEL:
"'Let them grow together until harvest;
then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters,
"First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning;
but gather the wheat into my barn."'" (Mt 13:30b)

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OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 19, 2020

Sunday:	16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	St. Apollinaris, Bishop and Martyr
Tuesday:	St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest and Doctor of the Church
Wednesday:	St. Mary Magdalene
Thursday:	St. Bridget, Religious
Friday:	St. Sharbel Makhlūf, Priest
Saturday:	St. James, Apostle
Next Sunday:	17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

NEVER GET TIRED OF DOING LITTLE THINGS FOR OTHERS. SOMETIMES THOSE LITTLE THINGS OCCUPY THE BIGGEST PART OF THEIR HEARTS.

—ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

REFLECT

FIRST READING
The Jewish sage speaks of God as master of all who judges us with clemency and governs us with leniency. What are some areas of your life that make you grateful for a merciful God?

SECOND READING
Paul teaches the Christians in Rome that the Spirit helps us "to pray as we ought." When do you find yourself most at prayer?

GOSPEL READING
We hear today a series of parables describing aspects of the kingdom of heaven: the parable of the weeds among the wheat, the parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the yeast. What do you think makes Jesus' parables such an effective method for teaching about the mystery of the kingdom of heaven?

DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

A friend recently confided in me that although he prayed frequently each day and was involved heavily in his parish, he did not sense much fruit coming from it all and was left feeling unsatisfied. I assured him he was not alone. I told him of a deceased pastor of mine who had spoken frequently about being in this type of situation. Even as a priest, he knew all too well of how we can feel like we are simply going through the motions. It is precisely at those times that continuing to pray and practicing good stewardship is most important, because it would be easier to simply take a break and risk never coming back. He liked to say, "Do the drill," meaning just do what needs to be done.

We are all called to be mature disciples who answer the call of Jesus Christ regardless of the cost. We cannot choose when and where the call will come. We cannot schedule our stewardship in a way that is always most convenient for us. Even when the fruits of our faithful efforts seem hidden from us, we hold to the promise that we are never called to give of ourselves for nothing. God is working through us and in us. No matter how dry the land may seem, seeds are being planted to yield a harvest greater than we can ever realize. Stay strong and do the drill!

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

WHY DO CATHOLICS EAT FISH ON FRIDAY?

Answer: For centuries, meatless Fridays were the norm for Catholics throughout the world. Friday was chosen because that was the day on which Jesus died, and Christians wanted to find a way to honor that day with special prayers and acts of penance and self-denial. The practice of abstaining from meat on Fridays — under pain of sin — grew out of that desire, and it became an official part of Church teaching until the time of the Second Vatican Council.

In the 1960s, there was a shift in the Church's thinking, in large part because there was a recognition that differences in cultures and economic realities meant that eating or not eating meat had different meanings for different peoples. For example, in cultures that were largely dependent on seafood or a vegetarian diet, abstaining from meat was no sacrifice at all. While in other places, eating fish and other kinds of seafood was actually something rare and special and not a sacrifice. This was all part of a basic reflection on "why we do what we do" among the Church's pastors.

Today, Catholics throughout the world are still instructed to abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent. The bishops of some countries, such as in England and Wales, ask Catholics to abstain from meat every Friday, continuing the older tradition. The Bishops of the United States have taken a slightly different approach, encouraging Catholics to honor Friday as a special day by abstaining from meat every Friday or by taking on some other work of penance or charity for the sake of others.

Regardless of what we choose to do, the real value in all of this is to see a reflection of Good Friday in each Friday, to remember the self-giving love of Jesus, and to honor that love through some sort of sacrifice or act of mercy.

LIVE THE LITURGY
INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Grace and sin are found together. As much as our hearts long for union with God, there is always that part of us that resists. As much as I wholeheartedly believe in God, there is a dimension of disbelief with which I also wrestle. Even though we may seek purity and integrity in all of our thoughts, words, and deeds, there is also the path toward weakness and sin that we find ourselves traversing. Just as weeds can easily overtake the best of gardens, so too can weakness and sin overtake and overwhelm a person. The call is to realize the power the weeds of sin have to choke us off from God's presence. While God allows the wheat and the weeds to exist together, we must keep our eyes fixed on God's mercy and forgiveness and resist the death that comes from giving way to sin and evil. In God's time, the eternal harvest will come, and we will no longer have to worry about the weeds. For now, we must be vigilant and regularly seek the assistance of the Master Gardener.

PLEASE CONSIDER ONLINE GIVING

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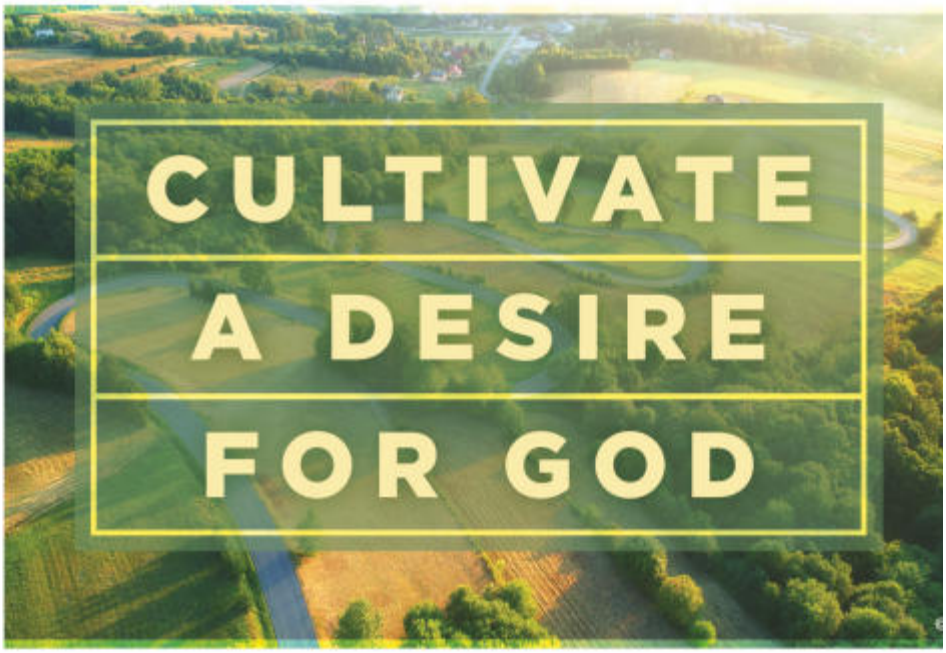
16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL MEDITATION
ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE



Grace and sin, belief and unbelief, good and evil all exist together. While we wrestle with these two dimensions of reality inwardly, they are also witnessed in the actions and words of others. Many, all too often, beat themselves up because of their sin. We are also all too quick to pass judgment on others whom we perceive to be in error and walking down a wrong path. God does not make rash judgments, nor should we. Patience is the order of the day as is an understanding that God is ultimately the caller of the shots.

Our faith tells us that while God allows the wheat and the weeds to coexist, the wheat will always triumph. As long as we can cultivate even a little faith and a small measure of desire for God, He can produce abundant blessings and good things. Even when the weeds seem to have triumphed, there still may be a small measure of faith remaining that can be cultivated and grown. It doesn't take much! Unless a person totally allows the weeds to reign, there is always to be found at least a small measure of faith, good, light, and love. With even this small portion, God can produce abundant growth.

Admittedly, it is easy to give into the weeds, and they grow very quickly. Any gardener knows this to be true. Sometimes, the weeds even seem more attractive and vibrant. Dealing with weeds can quickly become a losing battle, and they can look healthier and grow faster than the very plants we are trying to protect. It's easy to give into them and let them win. While God will deal with all things in due time, we are responsible for keeping things in check in the short term. It is our task to keep our eyes fixed on God's presence and mercy. We are asked to avoid judgment. And, it is not our responsibility to deal with the weeds in someone else's garden, only our own. One garden is enough responsibility for anyone.

Weeds have power. We have to realize this. While they can appear attractive and healthy, they can quickly choke us off from God's presence. Our task is one of maintenance and cultivating a desire for God. Even the smallest kernel of faith can grow into something wonderful. In God's time, the eternal harvest will come, and we will no longer have to worry about the weeds.

"He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn." ' " - Mt 13:29-30

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3 EASY STEPS

TO KEEPING YOURSELF & OTHERS HEALTHY!

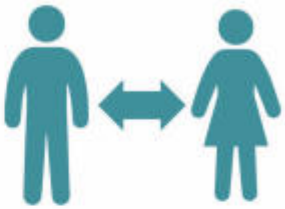
We are cautioned to be especially careful during the Coronavirus outbreak. Here are some simple ways to keep sickness away.

WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitizer frequently.

DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE

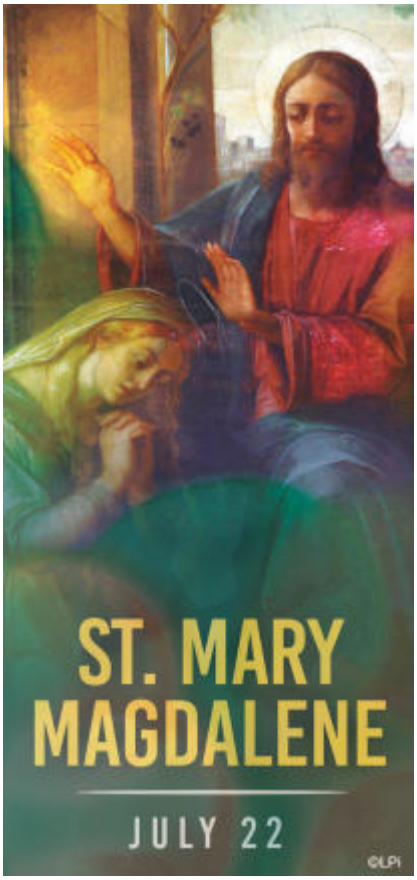
Especially around the eyes, nose and mouth. If you must sneeze, use a tissue or your arm.



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Practice social distancing during this epidemic and stay away from large groups. Instead, call, email or check up on family and friends using social media.

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Mary Magdalene,✞ 1st. C., was healed of possession by Jesus. She became a disciple of Jesus and was present at his crucifixion. In the Gospel of Mark, she was the first to witness to the risen Lord (hence, called the "apostle of the Apostles" . Almost universally agreed today that her being identified as the sinful woman of Lk 7:36:50 is unfounded. She is the patroness of the Order of Preachers.

The feast of St. James the Apostle, brother of St. John the Evangelist, has been celebrated in the West since the eighth century on July 25. He was the first apostle to shed his blood for Christ; he was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in the year 42 or 44, according to the Acts of the Apostles 12:2-3. He was buried at Jerusalem but tradition has it that around the year 830 his relics were transferred to Compostela, Spain, which became a popular center for pilgrimages throughout the Middle Ages.

James was the son of Zebedee and Salome (Mk 15:40; Mt 27:59) and he was one of the three privileged apostles, together with Peter and John. We witnessed the healing of Peter's mother in law (Mt 1:29-31), the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus (Mk 5:37-43), the transfiguration of Jesus (Mk 9:2-8), and the agony in the Garden (Mt 26:37). The tradition that he evangelized Spain has not been proven, nor do all scholars agree that the relics of St. James are at Compostela, Spain

Take Five for Faith
Daily renewal for busy Catholics

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

Monday, Jul 20, 2020
Optional Memorial of Apollinaris, Bishop, Martyr

According to tradition, the Syrian Saint Apollinaris was made a bishop of Ravenna, Italy by Saint Peter himself. The miracles and preaching of Apollinaris won over many converts, and the Romans in charge tortured and drove him from his city multiple times, but nothing could stop him from returning to his flock, until he eventually died from his beatings. If you need help persevering in the face of great challenges, look to this early Christian leader and pray for a dose of the strength he found in staying unwaveringly true to his faith and his church.

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 6:1-4, 6-8; Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday, Jul 21, 2020
Optional Memorial of Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest, Doctor of The Church

Lawrence of Brindisi, an Italian priest, surrendered everything he had to God's will. His offering consisted not only of the poverty, chastity, and obedience required of his Capuchin religious order, but also his compassion and considerable intellect. Lawrence's fluency in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, German, Bohemian, Spanish, and French meant he was tasked to translate the Bible as well as negotiate peace with other countries. None of these lofty pursuits kept him from showing love to everyone he met. May we all practice what he preached: "God is love and all his operations proceed from love."

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday, Jul 22, 2020
Feast of Mary Magdalene, Apostle of the Apostles

Contrary to the mistaken legend that arose later, Mary Magdalene was not a prostitute. She was a friend and follower of Jesus who accompanied him during his ministry and remained with him through the agony of his death. Compelled by unbearable grief, she is the first person in all four gospels to witness the empty tomb. In 2016, Pope Francis issued a decree that elevated this day from a memorial to a feast day as he called Mary Magdalene the Apostle to the Apostles. What good news of Jesus can you bring to others today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Song of Songs 3:1-4b or 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; John 20:1-2, 11-18

Thursday, Jul 23, 2020

In today's gospel Jesus notes that the crowd hears him but doesn't understand. Misunderstanding the message of Jesus was a problem from the beginning, which is why we all can use help in understanding matters of faith, help that is available from the Christian community. Catholics do not isolate scripture alone as the sole basis of faith but also emphasize tradition as essential to our understanding; tradition handed on through the church. You are part of the living Body of Christ that carries on the tradition. Today recall that you help express and form the tradition through your actions—make them good ones!

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13; Matthew 13:10-17

Friday, Jul 24, 2020
Optional Memorial of Sharbel Makhlūf, Priest

Legend says healing might be gained by traveling to Lebanon and praying at the tomb of Sharbel Makhlūf (1828-98), a Maronite monk known for his virtue and holiness. Closer to home, there's a mosaic shrine to Saint Sharbel located in New York City's St. Patrick Cathedral. Throughout the world, there are more than 3 million Maronite Christians, an Eastern Catholic Church established in the fifth century and in full communion with Rome. In a world with so much illness, today is a good day to ask Saint Sharbel to lend a healing hand. And we should all do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 3:14-17; Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday, Jul 25, 2020
Feast of James, Apostle

The apostle James, along with his brother John, members of Jesus' inner circle, were nicknamed the "sons of thunder" perhaps because of their fiery personalities. At one point in the gospels they asked Jesus if they should call "fire down from heaven" on a village that does not welcome them. Fortunately for the villagers (and for us) Jesus had a different idea of how power should be used—not for vengeance but for healing. Pray that those who wield great power in our own nation and world might take their cue on this point from Jesus rather than James.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28

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MASS INTENTIONS

Weekend of July 18th & 19th

- ✞ Steven Lamy
- ✞ Joseph Tai Dang
- ✞ David Staron

For the People of St. Steven's

- ✞ William (Bud) Milliron

Monday July 20th

- ✞ Mary Cass

Tuesday July 21st

- ✞ Robert Hawks

Wednesday July 22nd

- ✞ Diane & Gertrude Baulk

Thursday July 23rd

- ✞ Steven McCarthy

Friday July 24th

- ✞ Gertie & Diane Baulk

Weekend of July 25th & 26th

- ✞ Eileen Pardini
- ✞ Maria Natividad
- ✞ Thomas Phelan
- ✞ Robert Hawks

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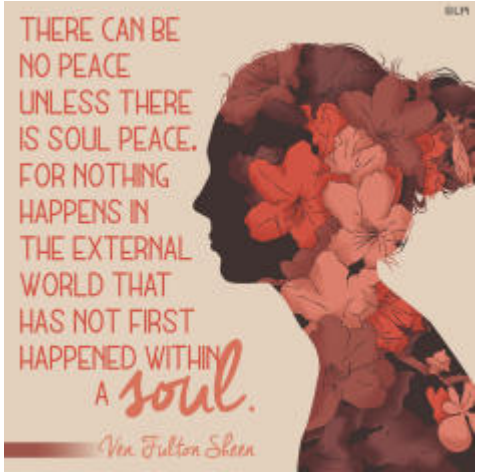

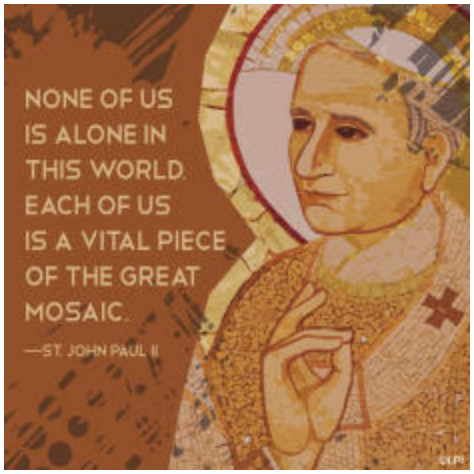

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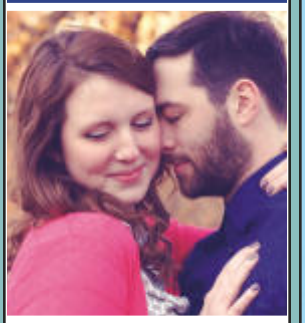

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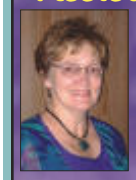

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