

Readings for the week of July 23, 2023

Sunday:

Wis 12:13, 16-19/Ps 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16
(5a)/Rom 8:26-27/Mt 13:24-43 or
13:24-30

Monday:

Ex 14:5-18/Ex 15:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-6/
Mt 12:38-42

Tuesday:

2 Cor 4:7-15/Ps 126:1bc-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5,
6/Mt 20:20-28

Wednesday:

Ex 16:1-5, 9-15/Ps 78:18-19, 23-24, 25-26,
27-28/Mt 13:1-9

Thursday:

Ex 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b/Dn 3:52, 53, 54, 55,
56/Mt 13:10-17

Friday:

Ex 20:1-17/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11/Mt 13:18-23

Saturday:

Ex 24:3-8/Ps 50:1b-2, 5-6, 14-15/Jn 11:19-
27 or Lk 10:38-42

Next Sunday:

1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12/Ps 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-
128, 129-130 (97a)/Rom 8:28-30/Mt
13:44-52 or 13:44-46



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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Patience is rooted in Hope (an image of a bush filled with birds would be great)

Life, like the church, is often burdened with evil, smallness, and impurities. The Lord's parables give us a hope-filled perspective on all three.

Evil: in Jesus' parable about the good farmer whose enemy plants weeds at night, Jesus tells us that God is not the cause of evil but permits evil to exist with good out of his patient love. He will finally deal with it, but his love lets things stay messy for a time.

Smallness: It's funny that Jesus says his kingdom looks like ... wait for it ... a bush. What a letdown! Yet this little shrub still somehow has room for all the birds of the sky. The smallness of the Church, and even our own little lives, still provides plenty of room for all whom God sends.

Impurities: divisions and hypocrisies in the Church and our own hearts exasperate us. Recall that Jesus compares his kingdom to a lump of dough with impure leaven eating away at it and therefore making it expand. It's the secret of the Cross. Not how we'd prefer it. But finally, great news.

The field, the bush, the loaf: all three parables invite us to embrace a patience rooted in hope: one day the field will be weeded, the bush filled with birds, and the risen loaf leaven-free.

— *Father John Muir*

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

The Catholic Bubble

There's a dangerous myth that exists among pockets of faithful, observant Catholic families. I call it the Legend of the Catholic Bubble.

Here's how the legend goes: you find a devout Catholic parish and a devout Catholic community filled with devout Catholic people who care about devout Catholic things, and you stay away from everything and everyone else, you and your children will be safe from the influence of the evil one. Your children will never fall away from the faith, or even be tempted, and your own faith will stay steel-strong amidst the many tempests and trials of this earthly life.

But like the Loch Ness Monster and the Abominable Snowman, it's all made up.

Don't misunderstand me: I *love* a good devout Catholic parish. I *live* for a supportive, devout Catholic community. It's one of the biggest blessings in the Christian life, and I cannot overstate how helpful it is to raise children in an environment that upholds your Catholic faith and does not denigrate it.

But. *But.*

Make no mistake: the Catholic Bubble will not save you. The trials and the temptations will find you there, too: on the parish council, at Catholic school, in your Catholic moms' group. No community on earth is so supportive that it mimics Heaven. The weeds have been sown with the good seed, and the harvest time is not yet upon us.

Cherish your community, certainly — but beware of the lure of the Catholic Bubble. We are called to be yeast in the loaf of bread, and yeast is nothing on its own.

"And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will."

— Romans 8:27

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that? Catholic Life Explained

Question:

Why do priests wear a Roman collar?

Answer:

The practice of priests wearing the Roman collar developed in the mid-nineteenth century as an alternative to wearing the cassock which in some places was seen as impractical or which was even outlawed by anti-Catholic legislation. Since its introduction, it has taken different forms, and if you visit different countries today, you will see variation in what priests wear.

The Code of Canon Law simply observes that priests wear "suitable ecclesiastical garb" according to the judgments of the national bishops conferences and local custom (no. 284). The US Bishops have instructed that outside of liturgical functions, a "black suit and Roman collar are the usual formal attire for priests. The use of the cassock is at the discretion of the cleric." Priests who are members of religious communities are to follow the rules of their institute regarding the habit or other approved clothing.

In the end, whether a priest wears the Roman collar, a religious habit, or, as is the case in many European countries, a suit and tie (to distinguish them from Protestant clergy who wear a collar) the goal of their clerical clothing is to serve as a sign of their commitment to guide and to serve, and to also allow them to be truly public figures because they are ordained for the service of all.

“The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”
- Mt 13:41-43a

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading

Our Jewish wisdom writer describes God as lenient, powerful, and kind. What words would you use to describe God?

Second Reading

Paul encourages the believers in Rome that the Spirit intercedes for us and teaches us what to pray for. What could you pray for this week?

Gospel Reading

In the parable of the weeds among the wheat, Jesus speaks privately to his disciples of the presence of the evil one, the devil in this world. How can we best defend our family and loved ones from evil?



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“OCCUPY YOUR MINDS WITH GOOD THOUGHTS, OR THE ENEMY WILL FILL THEM WITH BAD ONES.”

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- ST. THOMAS MORE