

Readings for the week of September 3, 2023

Sunday:

Jer 20:7-9/Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 (2b)/
Rom 12:1-2/Mt 16:21-27

Monday:

1 Thes 4:13-18/Ps 96:1 and 3, 4-5, 11-12,
13/Lk 4:16-30

Tuesday:

1 Thes 5:1-6, 9-11/Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14/Lk
4:31-37

Wednesday:

Col 1:1-8/Ps 52:10, 11/Lk 4:38-44

Thursday:

Col 1:9-14/Ps 98:2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6/Lk
5:1-11

Friday:

Mi 5:1-4a or Rom 8:28-30/Ps 13:6ab, 6c/
Mt 1:1-16, 18-23 or 1:18-23

Saturday:

Col 1:21-23/Ps 54:3-4, 6 and 8/Lk 6:1-5

Next Sunday:

Ez 33:7-9/Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)/Rom
13:8-10/Mt 18:15-20



Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Isn't it easy to relate to Peter? One moment Jesus announces Peter's deep communion with God the Father. The very next, when he rejects the logic of Jesus' suffering and death, Jesus calls Peter Satan. We Christians shouldn't be too shocked when we experience both spiritual highs and lows, when we perceive breathtaking contradictions in our hearts.

Like the great apostle, you and I are recipients of unfathomable graces. God dwells in us, calls his beloved children, and takes care of our every need. And we also continually fail to embrace our sufferings with trust in Jesus. We know the truth of the creed, but we easily scorn the weight of the cross.

The good news is that, like Peter, we are never abandoned by the Lord even at our worst moments. Peter will eventually learn the beauty of the cross when he is willingly crucified. But it took time for him to get there. And it takes time for us, too. This week let's not be too shocked at these divisions in our hearts but accept them and patiently seek to be more obedient to Jesus' cross-shaped plan for us.

— *Father John Muir*



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(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

Choosing the Cross

I've been called a lot of things in my life, but I've never been called "Satan," at least not to my face.

It seems to me the worst name you could call a person, and today we hear it straight from the lips of Jesus. It's just one of the many small reminders strewn throughout Scripture that Jesus preaches meekness, but he is not mild — not when mildness serves no purpose, anyway.

And here, when Peter is trying to deter Jesus from making the right choice, mildness serves no purpose at all.

Can we blame Peter? I certainly can't. I'm sure I would have said the same thing to my own dear friend. He is, in today's Gospel, wholly unwilling to embrace the cross — he's afraid of it, even — but aren't we all, in the end, afraid of our cross? I am. It's no sin, it's only human. Fear is natural. Self-preservation is a reflex.

What Christ speaks of today is a choice, one we are all faced with, again and again, just as Peter is. We will not always respond perfectly; Peter does not respond well today. He does not respond well on Holy Thursday.

But on his last day, on the day of the ultimate choice? On that day, he chooses the cross.

We marvel at first responders who put themselves in harm's way for the sake of others, because to do so is not human, it is divine. I have to believe that if even a firefighter's loved one threw themselves in his way, he would still charge toward the flames, crying, "Get behind me."

Christ runs into the burning building for us, shaking off not only his own fear (and he had it, I promise you — he was human, too) but the fear of everyone who loved him.

"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God..." — Romans 12:1

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that? Catholic Life Explained

Question:

What does the Church say about suicide?

Answer:

Unfortunately, despite the Church's clear teachings in resources like the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, there are still many people who are confused about what the Church teaches regarding the tragic reality of suicide.

While we hold that all life is sacred, we are also all-too aware that psychological, emotional, and even physical illness — as well as extreme anxiety, fear, and abuse — can lead individuals to take their own lives. Speaking to this, the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reflects, "Although suicide is always objectively sinful, one should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (pg. 294). The text also states the reality of illness or other extreme influences can "diminish the responsibility of one committing suicide" (pg. 293).

Parishes and grief support groups should show special care and concern for those families that have lost a loved one to suicide. And communities should always try to be mindful of those who might be at risk of suicide or self-harm.

If someone is contemplating suicide, please know that help is available, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988).

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?” - Mt 16:24b-26

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the loneliness and ridicule he endures for answering his prophetic call. Who do you turn to in times of personal sadness and distress?

Second Reading

Paul challenges us not to be conformed to the present world “but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” What can you do this week to grow in your thinking as someone who believes in Jesus?

Gospel Reading

Peter is resistant to Jesus’s revelation that as the Messiah, he is destined to suffer and die before rising. How do you react to news difficult to hear?



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“APART FROM THE CROSS, THERE IS NO OTHER LADDER BY WHICH WE MAY GET TO HEAVEN.”

PATRONESS OF THE INDIGENOUS OF AMERICA

- ST. ROSE OF LIMA