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“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

Luke 10

Twenty-Sixth Week of Ordinary Time: September 29 - October 5, 2013

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Twenty-Sixth Week of Ordinary Time

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is the focus of the **Luke's Gospel** on the **Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time**. This is a classic story of how the tables are turned in the afterlife. The rich man has it good in this life and ignores the plight of poor Lazarus. In the afterlife, it is the rich man who is in torment and Lazarus is the one who is enjoying heaven. The double irony comes when the rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers. Jesus responds: “If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.” Will we listen to the one who has risen from the dead?

We have a number of wonderful memorials this week: Monday, **Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church**; Tuesday, **Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church**; the **Holy Guardian Angels** and Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi**.

The first readings continue with the prophet **Zechariah** of the period of recovery after the exile. “They shall be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice.” The **Book of Nehemiah**, like Ezra, chronicles this history. The prophet **Baruch** gives us a prayer of the people in captivity and God's reply, “Fear not, my children; call out to God!”

We continue reading **Luke's Gospel**, as the disciples argue about who is the greatest. Jesus points out a young child and asks them to strive to be the “least” not the greatest. Jesus stops his disciples from preventing people, not of their group, from healing, because they are with Jesus, too. He stops the disciples from “calling down fire from heaven” on the Samaritan people who didn't give them a good reception. People come up, offering to follow Jesus, but have excuses for why they can't do it now. Jesus calls them to not “look back” once they have said, “yes.” He sends his disciples to other towns: “The harvest is rich but the workers are few.” Jesus warns the people blessed by the graces of his visits there, but who have not changed their ways. He prays, “I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.”

We read from **Luke's Gospel** on the **Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time** about the apostles asking Jesus, “Increase our faith.” Jesus assures them they only need faith the size of a mustard seed. Then, Jesus makes it clear that as disciples our role is that of servants.

Daily Prayer This Week

We can be inspired this week by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the beloved Little Flower and her “Little Way” of finding a path to God in the smallest of ways. An extraordinary young woman who lived close to our own times (not many saints have had their photographs taken); she is an example of a humble life of simplicity and humility.

This week we can ask for the desire to become the least, not the greatest, in ways that applies to us. We can ask to experience humility and grace in the real limits we experience in our lives. All of us have some places where we come to know our humanity and are brought to our knees: perhaps we continue to be judgmental of others even after asking for forgiveness ourselves; we keep falling into the same temptations; we present ourselves one way in public, but act a very different way with those closest to us; we never get around to acts of generosity and charity, perhaps even to our parents or with members of our own families.

We can all begin our mornings with our own version of this prayer: “Lord, help me to be more simple, authentic, transparent and trusting today. I don't want to try to be someone else.” We might ask, “Help me not 'look back' today, Lord” or “Lord, I need your help today to be more accepting of others who are different. Help me to see you in those who suffer or struggle in any way.”

For those who have hurt us in some ways, we can do as Thérèse of Lisieux suggests and pray for those people. It is nearly impossible to hold a grudge or hang onto a hurt inflicted by someone when we are praying for that person each day.

Throughout the day this week, we can take brief moments, in the background of our consciousness, while driving, going to a meeting, shopping, doing laundry, to repeat and deepen these prayers. And, may our God send prophets and angels and his own Son to help us find intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives. We can beg God to increase our faith and in the simplest ways each day, we can let our tiny seed of faith bloom in extraordinary ways in our lives.

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