

They ate and were satisfied.
 They picked up the fragments left over—seven
 baskets.
 There were about four thousand people.
 - Mark 8

Fifth Week of Ordinary Time: Feb. 6-12, 2011

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[PDF of this Page](#)

Fifth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Jesus encourages his disciples to let their light shine: “Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Scholastica, virgin**.

For the next two weeks, our first reading on the weekdays will be from the **Book of Genesis**. This week begins with the stirring story of creation, one that will be repeated at the Easter Vigil.

Mark's Gospel continues with stories of Jesus' healing and of his challenging and being challenged by the religious authorities. “People immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats.” The Pharisees and scribes question Jesus asking, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?” A frustrated Jesus responds, “You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition.” Jesus challenges the people to disregard rules about being defiled by food but to avoid the evil desires and deeds that defile their hearts. Traveling north into pagan territory, Jesus visits a woman whose daughter has an unclean spirit. Jesus heals her because the mother believes in him. On his way back, Jesus heals a man, allowing him to hear and speak again. Jesus feeds 4,000 people for whom he is moved with pity.

On the **Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

Daily Prayer This Week

Every week we are trying to find intimacy with our Lord in the midst of our everyday life. We use the stories about Jesus in the readings of the week to help us. Because our days are so busy, those stories make connections among what we are experiencing, God's Word to us and the desires that are coming to the surface in us.

This week we can let various parts of this week's rich scripture readings touch us, depending on what is going on in us. It all begins with our beginning the day, establishing a connection. With the briefest of rising prayers, we can talk with our Lord about what we anticipate needing that day.

One day I might know that, with what I have to face that day, I need to ask that the healing Jesus be with me. I might be able to name what needs healing. “Lord, you know the fear that is developing in me as I face this meeting today.” “Lord, take this anger away from my heart.” “Most loving Lord, have mercy on me and heal this pattern that plagues me and takes away my happiness, my freedom, my ability to love.”

On another day, I may know that I'm right in the middle of the struggle over my disregarding what God really wants me to do, using legalistic excuses to avoid God's will. I might beg, “Lord, I've become such a hypocrite. Purify my heart so I can see as you see, judge as you judge and love as you love. Help me be truly religious, truly compassionate, truly your disciple today.”

On other days, I might be in a “foreign” territory, or at least one that seems quite a distance from believing territory. I might ask, “Dear Lord, keep me safe here. Give me courage here. Help me find intimacy with you here. And let me see the faith of so many of your people here.”

we hear **Matthew's Gospel**. Jesus speaks to his followers about religious laws and also of our own relationships. Go to offer gifts to God at the altar, but first, Jesus says, "Leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Some day this week, let's imagine how Jesus has pity on our hunger and feeds us. And every night this week, let's express our gratitude for receiving what we asked for in faith, from the One who is waiting to give us what we need.

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