

For where two or three are
gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.

- Matthew 18

Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time: Aug. 10-16, 2008

The Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time

On the **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Elijah finds God not in the thunder and driving wind, but in a gentle breeze. Peter's fear gets the best of him, when Jesus calls him out of his boat in a stormy sea. Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and would have perished without Jesus' rescuing him.

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Clare**. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe, priest and martyr**. Friday is the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, with its own special readings.

This week we begins a two week series of readings from the **Prophet Ezekiel**. He his vivid visions tell of the destruction of Israel to come and the salvation that will follow.

Matthew's Gospel offers us a number of familiar and powerful stories as we reflect upon God's mercy and our call to imitate God's love. Jesus predicts his passion and miraculously resolves a conflict over temple tax. It is not the temple tax for which he will be executed, but for what he reveals about God's love and mercy to sinners. Unless we are humble and trusting like children, we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus tells us the hard work we should go through to reconcile with a sinner. He says that whenever we are gathered together, in his name, he is with us. He tells us to forgive - over and over again - and tells the parable of the servant who is forgiven but won't forgive a fellow servant. Children were not regarded very highly and the disciples tried to bar them from bothering Jesus. Jesus welcomes them - and all the powerless they represent: "for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

God's love belongs to all of us, according to the readings of the **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. In **Isaiah**, God promises "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Paul, in his **Letter to the Romans**, tells us "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" and

Daily Prayer This Week

Finding intimacy with our Lord is not limited to people who can go away on a retreat. We can all be contemplatives in action, if only we can focus on our relationship with the Lord in the background, every day. This week we can feed on the words of life which Jesus gives us. And, we can ask for the graces we need, in the midst of our busy lives. With the celebration of the Assumption toward the end of the week, we can ask Mary to help us keep our consciousness on connecting our desires with the concrete details of our life this week.

Throughout this week, we can wake up and go through our morning routine asking for the grace that God's mercy might flow through us this day. One day, I might take notice of those in my life who need my forgiveness. I might pay attention to the one who frustrates me or has hurt me or has hurt those I love - real people I know (living or dead) or the anonymous people who represent the systems, institutions and structures that seem unjust or sinful. There are people who benefit from war, the poverty or slavery of others, the sacrilege against the dignity of life itself, the drug trade and the destruction of the environment. I can actually take the grace-filled moments of brief intimacy with Jesus this week to forgive! This week of mercy can be a powerful blessing for our whole lives.

This can be a wonderful week for us to remember how many times we are called to forgive. And, we might want to take a few extra moments to reinforce this by re-reading the [parable of the servant](#) who has been forgiven himself but refuses to forgive. If we are really stuck in our struggle to forgive, we can find times to beg for the grace: "Dear Lord, you keep forgiving me, please let me experience the intimacy of forgiving as you have forgiven me. Give me the humility of a little child to remember how often I need to forgive others."

Throughout this week, we'll be embracing little children and other "little ones" because we will be delighting in being one with him and his

refers to himself as the “apostle to the Gentiles.” In **Matthew's Gospel**, Jesus hears the pleas of a “foreign” woman, a Canaanite who begs Jesus to heal her daughter.

being one with us. And, we'll give thanks and praise.