

When you hold a banquet,
invite the poor, the crippled, the lame,
the blind;
blessed indeed will you be
because of their inability to repay you.
- Luke 14

Thirty-first Week of Ordinary Time: Nov. 2-8, 2008

The Thirty-First Week of Ordinary Time

On Sunday, November 2, we celebrate the **Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed** (All Souls Day). Among the many choices of readings for that day, many will hear John's Gospel, where Jesus promises, "everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saint Charles Borromeo, bishop**.

The first readings this week are from Paul's wonderful **Letter to the Philippians**.

Continuing **Luke's Gospel**, Jesus talks about not inviting all the "right" people into our lives, but to include "the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." "For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." He tells the parable of the invited guests who made excuses to decline the invitation. He sends his servants to invite everyone. Jesus tells a crowd that they have to renounce their grudges and forgive to be his disciple and that to do something really important, we have to prepare and be ready. He tells two parables: the shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to look for one lost one and the woman who searches for a gold coin. "In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents." The story of the dishonest steward who is caught over-charging his master's customers and saves himself by cutting his master's prices prompts Jesus to say, "the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than the children of light." Finally, Jesus says that we can't have two masters, trying to love God and money. When a Pharisee sneered at him, he said: "what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God."

Next Sunday is the **Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome**. This day celebrates the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome, headed by the

Daily Prayer This Week

This week it is clear that Jesus is calling us to a deeper love of our neighbor. He is telling us that we need to expand the list of those we are to love. He is telling us to have more passion in our desire to love others and he is urging us to prepare for how we will do that. Finally, Jesus makes it clear that we can't try to love money or honors and at the same time love God.

This is a wonderful background reflection for us this week. All week we can ask the Lord to help us. The quality of our asking will make all of the difference.

Dear Lord, help me today when, in my busyness, I become self absorbed. Help me, in my intensity, when I take things personally. Help me, in the burdens I bear, to give up my escape into self-pity.

Dear Lord, thank you for loving me and for showering so many gifts on me and my family. Help me to be more grateful and more generous. Today, help me to notice the needs of others. Help me to hear the news with more compassion. Help me imagine what I can do for others in need. I know the cost of discipleship with you will be easy when I remember your love.

Dear Lord, I am really getting it that the lure of "riches and honors" can easily seduce my heart. Why is it so tempting to like and want to be with the beautiful people, the "successful" people? Why do I get sucked into these values and these ways of valuing myself and others? Let me choose "simple," Lord. Let me choose "solidarity." And, when I resist, call me.

These kinds of prayers, or the prayers that come to my heart in this or that daily situation - so simple to express to the Lord in 20 or 30 seconds as I walk down a hall or do any ordinary thing that allows me turn to God - can transform our days. These are words of intimacy, faith, trust, reliance. They acknowledge small graces and ask for bigger

Pope, who is also Bishop of Rome. In celebrating this special church, we have an opportunity to celebrate Church itself. The reading from **Ezekiel** offers a vision of a trickle of water seeping from a temple, which quickly becomes a life-giving river. In **John's Gospel** we see Jesus throwing out the money-changers who were defiling the temple: "Stop making my Father's house a marketplace."

ones. They come out of a desire to grow in our relationship with the Lord and out of a confidence that with his grace, we can enjoy the blessing of being his disciples. Each night this week, let us give thanks.