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## The Tenth Week of Ordinary Time

*Your piety is ... like the dew that early passes away.  
...It is love that I desire, not sacrifice,  
and knowledge of God rather than  
holocausts.*

This passage from **Hosea** begins our readings for the **10th Week of Ordinary Time**. Its message about a loving heart rather than public piety is a theme that will be continued throughout the week. The Gospel for this Sunday is the call of the Apostle, Matthew. As a tax collector, Matthew was despised and feared by most of the population, and yet Jesus invites him - and us - "Follow me."

During the week we begin a two week look at **Paul's second letter to the Corinthians**. In this spirited letter, Paul writes to the early Christian community at Corinth, both to encourage them and to defend himself from his detractors. He urges us to allow our hearts to be transformed by the Spirit of God. "We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us."

Saturday our first reading celebrates a memorial to **St. Barnabas**, who, like Paul, was an apostle to the Gentiles.

The **Gospel of Matthew** this week begins with the beloved teaching of the Beatitudes, found at the beginning of the **Sermon on the Mount**. The Kingdom of God belongs to the lowly, the peacemakers, those persecuted. These words are some of the most familiar of all the gospels as Jesus urges us to not hide our gifts under a bushel basket but to recognize that "you are the light of the world." Jesus transforms what the people had been taught. We are to go beyond not killing; we are to love our enemies. He tells us that he has "not come to abolish laws but to fulfill them."

Jesus tells us that if we haven't forgiven someone, we should leave our offerings on the altar and go forgive those with whom we need reconciliation. By the end of the week, we hear Jesus encouraging us to live honestly, making elaborate promises and oaths unnecessary. "Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and

## Daily Prayer This Week

This week of prayer can be very blessed. Just as Jesus looked out on that crowd of followers and saw the spiritually poor, who were mourning and stripped of all success, looking for justice, yet themselves merciful and seeking to make peace with others, Jesus looks upon us this week. His words to us remain the same, "Rejoice and be glad." All week, we can ask for the grace to understand and embrace the blessedness of poverty, of our grief, of our seeking for justice, of how difficult it is to be merciful and be a peacemaker. We are blessed in this place, because Jesus promises we will be comforted, we will be shown mercy, we will be God's children, because the Kingdom of Heaven is ours.

So, the first movement for the week is to let Jesus change our perspective on things. We can practice all week seeing things from Jesus' point of view. When we get so angry with someone, we might be tempted to scream at them, or worse, we can let Jesus speak to our hearts and help us with the grace to forgive that person and actually love, as Jesus loves. If our eye causes us to sin, we can hear Jesus reminding us that we'd be better without that precious gift of our sight, that suffering the deadly effects of what is happening to us, through our fantasies.

This type of daily prayer, that finds intimacy with God throughout our very busy days can only work if we keep focusing on what we are desiring each day. And that can only work if we begin each day, naming our desires. Keep the desires simple: for example, "Lord, today, please help me see the grace you are offering me in the poverty I feel in this situation. It can take only seconds to say that in the morning when I get up, or while I'm showering or getting dressed. But, by saying out "out loud," in our head, we give shape to a background place of conversation with the Lord all day. With some focused moments throughout the day, our desires will interact with the events our day.

"It is here, Lord, that you are asking me to surrender my anger. Mercy is so hard, but it is the way to life you are offering me. I know you desire mercy more than sacrifice. I so much want to know the blessedness of being a loving person. I feel more peaceful just knowing you are with me as I try to respond to this person with more compassion and forgiveness."

your 'No' mean 'No,'" he says. The words we use are less important than the life we lead.

All of this leads us to the **Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time** in which Jesus tells us "The harvest is plenty but the laborers are few" and calls us to join him in his work.

Each evening, our daily prayer comes to closure. We briefly look back through our day and remember those moments of "connection" and thank the Lord for the graces given. It takes practice, but the rewards are what we truly desire.

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