

# Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 31, 2021

## God's Greatest Commandments

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Today's first reading recalls the most sacred text in Judaism, the Shema Israel: "Hear [O] Israel." These words are so sacred for Jews, they are prayed in the most important moments of peril or supreme holiness. Jews don't take these words lightly because they express the essence of their religion and relationship to God.

As Catholics, we fully agree with our Jewish brothers and sisters on this matter. Jesus himself answered the question of what was the first, greatest commandment—it was the Shema Israel.

Why is it so important? Because it declares the unity of God: "The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!" (Deuteronomy 6:4). He is one supreme God, not a multitude of divinities as in the Greek and Roman polytheistic religions, or even today in Hinduism and Buddhism.

This belief in one God makes the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Christianity unique. Second, this supreme God deserves our love and obedience. "You shall love the Lord your God..." Our role as creatures called and saved by him is to offer loving obedience.

The Second Commandment flows from the first: If we love God above all, then we need to love our brothers, sisters, and ourselves.

What better example is there of this love for God and neighbor than the love of a mother for her child? Our love for God should be reverent, tender, compassionate, and unique. Only you can give him your kind of love. There should be a constant flow of affection and union between us—no separation between him and us. +

*Our love for God should be reverent, tender.  
Our role as creatures called and saved by him is to offer loving obedience.*

### Word from Pope Francis

Vanity never heals. Rather, it is poisonous, it goes on bringing the disease in your heart, bringing you that hardness of heart that tells you: "No, do not go to the Lord, do not go. Stay by yourself." Vanity is precisely the place to close ourselves to the call of the Lord.

Homily, March 10, 2020



## Sunday Readings

### Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe [the commandments], that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly.

### Hebrews 7:23-28

He, because he remains forever, has a priesthood that does not pass away.

### Mark 12:28b-34

[The scribe said to Jesus,] "'To love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How can I express greater reverence for God?
- How can I express greater tenderness toward my loving Father?

# Winning, Losing for Jesus

By Kathleen M. Basi

S ometime after St. Teresa of Calcutta died, it became known that she had suffered for many years from spiritual darkness. From the mainstream media, I remember getting the impression that her holiness was somehow lessened because of it.

It was more than a decade before I read *Come Be My Light*, a book compilation of her private reflections. When I did, I was struck by her observation that often those who exude the most joy and peace are hiding great suffering. She recognized this truth years before she began to experience the darkness that characterized the rest of her life.

That darkness, when it arrived, was bewildering for someone who had long experienced great tenderness in her relationship with Jesus. The only time she sensed his presence was when she was serving the poor and marginalized. Eventually she came to realize that the overwhelming feeling of being unwanted and unloved by God was what allowed her to share the experience of people she served day in and day out—those who felt that same rejection from the entire world.

The darkness, in other words, helped her love Jesus better. And because she accepted it without complaint, offering it as a sacrifice of love, she was able to exude a joy that attracted even people who had rejected faith.



I'm not so sure most of us would have the spiritual stamina to hold on to faith under a similar challenge, let alone see it bear such abundant fruit. In my case, I'm sure of it.

We're conditioned to expect our faith to give comfort in hard times—and often, it does. During times of spiritual dryness, though, the common truisms—"God won't give you anything you can't handle," "It's all part of God's plan," and so on—feel baldly inadequate. In fact, they can cause us to blame ourselves. Surely our spiritual desert is our own fault. If our faith were stronger, it would go away.

I think Mother Teresa's solution is a better one. We all suffer every day, and

the causes range from the trifling to the profound: drivers who seem determined to annoy us; the boss or coworker who persecutes us; the discomfort caused by an aging body; the pain of loss, broken relationships, or depression. All too often, we take our sufferings out on others.

What would happen if, instead, we offered those sufferings to God as an act of love? What would happen if we, like Mother Teresa, learned through our sufferings to empty ourselves so completely that the only thing the world saw in us was the joy of God?

If we did that, we just might change the world. +

*The fruits of service and joy can shine forth even in great spiritual dryness.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, I am grateful for your love and guidance. Show me how to love you, myself, and my neighbors genuinely and generously.*

*From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

November 1–6

**Monday, All Saints:**

Rv 7:2–4, 9–14 / 1 Jn 3:1–3 / Mt 5:1–12a

**Tuesday, All the Faithful Departed (All Souls):**

Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 5:5–11 / Jn 6:37–40

**Wednesday, Weekday:**

Rom 13:8–10 / Lk 14:25–33

**Thursday, St. Charles Borromeo:**


Rom 14:7–12 / Lk 15:1–10

**Friday, Weekday:**

Rom 15:14–21 / Lk 16:1–8

**Saturday, Weekday:**

Rom 16:3–9, 16, 22–27 / Lk 16:9–15

Bringing Home  
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# Bringing Home the Word

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 24, 2021

## Boldly Believe!

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

**I**t rarely does any good to follow the crowd. Most people follow the path of least resistance, just floating along. Jesus said the path to heaven is narrow and few follow it. Dare to believe in eternal truths, in Jesus, and swim against the current.

Just look at what happened to blind Bartimaeus. He wanted the impossible, to be healed by Jesus, but he was at a big disadvantage. He couldn't see Jesus in order to find him. So, what did he do? He started by using his only strength—his loud voice. He couldn't run after Jesus but could only sit and call out.

## Sunday Readings

### Jeremiah 31:7-9

I will lead them to streams of water, / on a level road, without stumbling.

### Hebrews 5:1-6

Every high priest is taken from among men...He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness.

### Mark 10:46-52

[Bartimaeus] threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.... "Master, I want to see."

Lesson one: Use whatever talent you have to reach Jesus. Don't focus on what you lack but on what you have.

The crowd told him to be quiet and polite, not upsetting the moment. Bartimaeus "kept calling out all the more" (Mark 10:48). Lesson two: Ignore the crowd if they keep you from Jesus and your dreams.

Jesus hears his cry and calls for Bartimaeus, who springs up with a newfound joy because Jesus reached out to him. He stumbles toward him, directed by the crowd. Lesson three: Go to Jesus with your weakness! It doesn't bother him. It attracts him.

Jesus asks what he wants, and blind Bartimaeus boldly asks for the impossible: to see. Impossible, unless he believed Jesus was in fact the Son of David, the Messiah, the miracle worker. Jesus gives him exactly what his faith merited. Lesson four: Boldly believe and pursue the impossible. Jesus wants to give it to you! +

*Dare to believe  
in eternal truths,  
in Jesus,  
and swim against  
the current.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

In the biblical tradition, the Son of Man is the one who receives from God "dominion, glory, and kingship" (Daniel 7:14). Jesus fills this image with new meaning. He shows us that he enjoys dominion because he is a servant, glory because he is capable of abasement, kingship because he is fully prepared to lay down his life.

Homily, October 18, 2015



REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS  
**QUESTIONS**  
REFLECTION

- What do you need Jesus to fill?
- Are you the answer to how Jesus wants to fill someone's need?

# A Tough Language

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

I've been a student of the Spanish language for many years, and I've bitten my tongue (literally) more times than I can count trying to say tongue-twisting words and phrases. It's tough to learn a new language. Think back to when you studied a language that was new to you in high school or college. Or maybe you took a crash course in Italian in anticipation of a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Rome. Or it could be that in the world of international business and your travel for work, you had to learn words in Chinese or Korean.

Nouns verbs, pronouns, conjugations, and declensions are all mind-expanding, headache-inducing, and not at all easy to remember. Plus, it's tough trying to get your mouth coordinated for the pronunciation of consonants and vowels you never heard of and tuning your ears to sounds that are unfamiliar and indecipherable. While learning a new language can be challenging, the process can be made a bit easier—or should I say, more palatable—with help.

Like learning a new language, learning to pray can be tough! It can be very much like taking Spanish 101. I'm not talking about learning Aramaic, the language Jesus likely spoke, or even speaking in tongues. I'm talking about learning to converse freely and familiarly with our Savior, Jesus Christ, who came from heaven, returned there, and who desperately wants us to end up there one day.



The good news is many of the tools that are helpful in learning languages are transferable. They can also be helpful in building a prayer life. For example, repeating words over and over and committing them to memory creates a structure to build on when learning other new words. Repetition teaches the muscles in your mouth and face new patterns of movement and your ears new sounds.

A mentor can encourage, correct, model conversation and proper pronunciation, and teach dialogue. And help you laugh at yourself. Have a sense of humor, be willing to embarrass yourself, and don't take yourself too seriously.

Time—maybe months and years—is required. Some courses promise proficiency in weeks. Impossible! Only time, and lots of it, can get mind and mouth in sync so that you can one day achieve fluency. So much can get lost in translation.

“In the beginning was the Word,” says the Scriptures (John 1:1). At Christmas we will celebrate the day when God in Christ Jesus came to earth. He then learned to speak human words so we might learn to speak heavenly words and someday fully comprehend the Word that was spoken at the beginning of time. To learn the language of heaven, take the Gospels seriously. Repeating Jesus' words expands our minds and hearts. Find a mentor, someone well-versed in prayer, and take time—lots of it—to practice. Who wants to get to heaven and find out they don't speak the language? It's time to learn a second language! +

*A prayer mentor might be just the ticket for you.*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I am grateful you came to heal the brokenhearted.*

*Help me to trust in you when I am in trouble.*

*From Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 25–30

**Monday, Weekday:**  
Rom 8:12–17 / Lk 13:10–17


**Tuesday, Weekday:**  
Rom 8:18–25 / Lk 13:18–21

**Wednesday, Weekday:**  
Rom 8:26–30 / Lk 13:22–30

**Thursday, Sts. Simon and Jude:**  
Eph 2:19–22 / Lk 6:12–16

**Friday, Weekday:**  
Rom 9:1–5 / Lk 14:1–6

**Saturday, Weekday:**  
Rom 11:1–2a, 11–12, 25–29 / Lk 14:1, 7–11

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# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 17, 2021

## Contemplating Jesus

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The painting in the Vatican, *Christ the Redeemer*, is totally Christ-centered, as is our Scripture passage. He is the dominant subject placed dramatically in the center of Correggio's composition, seated on a throne of clouds. His kingdom is not of the world, and neither are his priorities: "Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all" (Mark 10:44).

Jesus is strongly self-confident in his pose, yet sweet and inviting in his facial features. He is a king and a friend. His upper body is set, but his lower body is actively moving forward with his leg

stepping toward us. He sits to receive and rule but is willing to step down and wash the soiled feet of his disciples.

It's good to pause and reflect on this Jesus who calls us to follow him. As a man, he preached like no one before or since. Two millennia later we are still talking about him. He possessed such power and dignity that soldiers sent to arrest him wouldn't dare lay hands on him. Kings (Herod), politicians (Pilate), churchmen (Pharisees), lawyers (scribes), civil servants (tax collectors), simple laborers (apostles), soldiers (at the cross), hardened sinners (prostitutes), and the poor were overcome by his compassion, authority, and character. Religious and pagans, men and women, children and the elderly—all were enraptured by his purpose and passion.

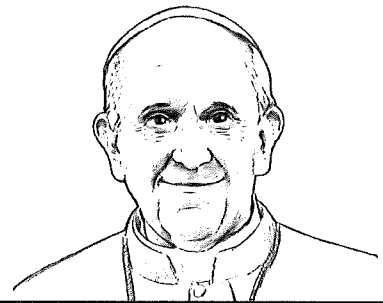
This amazing figure is the one who calls you and loves you! Spend time contemplating the beauty and moral integrity of this Jesus and give thanks that he has set his eyes and heart on you. +

*It's good to pause and reflect on this Jesus who calls us to follow him. He preached like no one before or since.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

The way of service is the most effective antidote against the disease of seeking first place.... Therefore, as disciples of Christ, let us receive this Gospel passage as a call to conversion, in order to witness with courage and generosity a Church that bows at the feet of the least, in order to serve them with love and simplicity.

Angelus, October 21, 2018



## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 53:10-11

My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, / their iniquity he shall bear.

### Hebrews 4:14-16

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way.

### Mark 10:35-45 or 10:42-45

[Jesus said,] "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What aspect of the person of Jesus Christ most attracts you?
- What is it about you that attracts Jesus? Ask him.

# Mountaintop Moments

By Kathleen M. Basi

One of my favorite hymns begins, “Tis good, Lord, to be here!” Text writer Joseph A. Robinson captured what it must have felt like to witness the transfiguration of Jesus. Peter wanted to build a memorial on the site; Luke, in perhaps the first recorded facepalm in history, simply writes, “But he did not know what he was saying” (Luke 9:33).

We’re a lot like Peter, really. We catch a glimpse of the glory of God, and it’s so overwhelming that we don’t know how to process it properly. It doesn’t fit into our neat categories: good, bad, happy, sad. All we know, as Robinson wrote, is that we want to “hold the vision bright and make this hill our own.”

Mountaintop moments happen when we’re pulled out of our ordinary. We encounter them on retreat, at parish missions, and in moments of fundamental transition: birth, death, an earth-shattering diagnosis. God seems closer. Life seems bathed in the glow of new insight. Everything seems so clear. So simple.

Yet we all know the hard part comes later, when it’s time to weave new insight into the well-worn routines—even ruts—that comprise our daily existence.

Some days we find ourselves exquisitely aware of God’s redeeming love. We understand what that means, and we know just what we must do to reflect that love and redemption out into our small corner of the kingdom.

The next day, the glory that seemed



so all-encompassing gets buried by lack of sleep, cranky kids (or spouses, or students, or bosses!)—even shifting hormones.

Small wonder that we, like the disciples, want to build memorials to the great spiritual highlights of our lives. We hope somehow it will help us hold on to that moment of clarity, a snapshot in time when seeing was believing and discipleship required only that we stand still and be present.

Unfortunately, that’s not how it works. Insight might happen on the mountaintops, but growth doesn’t. Growth happens when insight encounters resistance. If we enshrine our moments in a sterile place, untouched by

the messiness of the real world, they will grow stale and impotent.

Mountaintop experiences become powerful when they butt up against the murky valleys of life and shine some of that sublime glory upon the comfortable, familiar darkness. That is why the last stanza of Joseph Robinson’s hymn always moves me to tears:

*’Tis good, Lord, to be here.  
Yet we may not remain;  
But since thou bidst us  
leave the mount,  
Come with us to the plain.*

+

## PRAYER

*Lord, I am grateful for your gift of humility. Give me a humble heart so that I may imitate your compassionate ways with all people.*

*From Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 18–23

**Monday**, St. Luke: 2 Tm 4:10–17b / Lk 10:1–9

**Tuesday**, Sts. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, and Companions:  
Rom 5:12, 15b, 17–19, 20b–21 / Lk 12:35–38

**Wednesday**, Weekday: Rom 6:12–18 / Lk 12:39–48

**Thursday**, Weekday:


Rom 6:19–23 / Lk 12:49–53

**Friday**, Weekday:

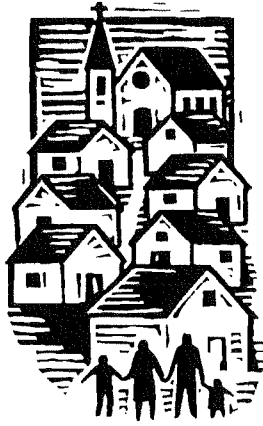
Rom 7:18–25a / Lk 12:54–59

**Saturday**, Weekday:

Rom 8:1–11 / Lk 13:1–9

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# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 10, 2021

## The Wisdom of the Cross

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The Book of Wisdom is attributed to King Solomon, son of David. Solomon asked God for the gift of wisdom rather than longevity or power. To be a good ruler, he desired to know the truth, to have depth and understanding. He knew this was the strongest foundation a ruler could have. Even if he were a king appointed by God, he would one day have to render an account at his own judgment.

The Roman Emperor Constantine also learned this truth. Giulano Romano's fresco in the Vatican, *The Vision of the Cross*, is dedicated to a vision of

Constantine's. The historians Eusebius of Caesarea and Lactantius tell us of how—ahead of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in which Constantine would attack Maxentius to reunite the empire under himself—he had a vision of a cross in the heavens and heard these words: "In this sign, you will conquer."

Constantine was not a Christian, yet he had this sign emblazoned on the breastplates and shields of his soldiers. They won that battle against great odds. Archeologists have uncovered shields, helmets, breastplates, and coins with this symbol, attesting to the truth of his vision.

Eventually Constantine, the most powerful figure in the world, was baptized a Catholic and built several large churches in Rome, including St. Peter's Basilica. This was not to his political advantage, and the risk he took in promoting the faith showed the sincerity of his conversion. He understood the wisdom of the cross, and it was worth selling all to follow Jesus and receive the treasure of eternal life. +

*Constantine had a vision of a cross in the sky before a battle. Later, he became a Catholic.*

### A Word from Pope Francis

In Jesus' final...invitation, there is no proposal of poverty, but of true richness....Being able to choose between an original and a copy, who would choose the copy? ...The challenge [is] finding life's original, not the copy. Jesus does not offer surrogates, but true life, love, richness!

General audience, June 13, 2018



## Sunday Readings

### Wisdom 7:7-11

I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.

### Hebrews 4:12-13

The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword.

### Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27

[Jesus said,] "Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do I give more credence to fads or feel-good philosophies than to the truth revealed by Jesus?
- Do I seek real wisdom by reading Scripture and pondering God's truths?

# Timeless, Timely

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

A little-known work by St. Alphonsus Liguori, but arguably one of his greatest, is *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ*. It has been a long time since I read it from cover to cover. In fact, I had forgotten about it until recently. I remembered it while reading Pope Francis' 2016 post-synod apostolic exhortation on marriage and the family, *The Joy of Love*, also known as *Amoris Laetitia*. Both works use a similar structure based on St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, following his statements about love and calling the reader to experience the love of God in a profound way.

*The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ* was written in a very different time (the eighteenth century), by one man, and as a tool for pastoral ministry among the poor in the hill country outside of Naples, Italy. *Amoris Laetitia* is the product of worldwide consultation, two sessions of a synod, and Pope Francis' desire that the Church be more compassionate and inclusive. These obvious differences in no way keep the two works from complementing each other in ways that could prove helpful to the reader. Here are some examples:

*The Practice* focuses on the individual, loved by God and invited to respond in love to God. *The Joy of Love* focuses on community, God's love revealed through the gift of marriage and family. Marriages and families are only as good and holy as the individuals who make them up.

*The Practice* offers a program for



individual spiritual growth that can certainly benefit spouses and families. *The Practice* is foundational and practical in its approach, presenting the underpinnings of good conscience formation and faithful discipleship lived in response to God's love revealed through the paschal mystery. It discusses key practices like prayer and discernment that are helpful for making good moral choices in general and which can easily be applied to help married couples and families deal with the problems and pressures weighing on them today, as discussed in *Amoris Laetitia*.

*The Joy of Love* spends much time describing the joys and sorrows of human love. *The Practice* emphasizes divine love as the remedy for human

suffering sometimes brought about by the imperfections and failures of human love. *The Joy of Love* describes well the complexity of marriage and family life, and the temptations families experience because of cultures and societies that are "post-Christian." *The Practice* offers spiritual direction for those who are struggling with temptations and looking to be freed of them.

How necessary it is that contemporary Church documents be read in conjunction with the works of the great spiritual writers of our Tradition. The spiritual wisdom of the saints is timeless, always fresh, always timely. Saint Alphonsus has much to contribute to the Church of today, a spirituality that has been proven accessible, practical, and effective in helping people experience the love of the Redeemer. +

*The writings of  
St. Alphonsus and  
Pope Francis are  
complementary.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, I am grateful for your gentle reminders of what is important in life. Help me to let go of anything that blocks the flow of love from my heart to the hearts of my sisters and brothers.*

*From Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 11-16

**Monday, Weekday:** Rom 1:1-7 / Lk 11:29-32

**Tuesday, Weekday:** Rom 1:16-25 / Lk 11:37-41

**Wednesday, Weekday:** Rom 2:1-11 / Lk 11:42-46


**Thursday, Weekday:** Rom 3:21-30 / Lk 11:47-54

**Friday, St. Teresa of Jesus:**

Rom 4:1-8 / Lk 12:1-7

**Saturday, Weekday:**

Rom 4:13, 16-18 / Lk 12:8-12

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# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 3, 2021

## Men, Women, and God's Creative Plan

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

On the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, inspired by a passage from today's first reading, Michelangelo painted the moment when God creates woman out of the side of man. He depicts her standing beside the slumbering Adam, almost arguing with God. It may represent the eternal discussion about the relationship of man and woman. Or perhaps it recalls the scene of a man asleep on the sofa while the woman wonders, "What's wrong with him?" Happily, Eve asks the one with the answer: God.

### Sunday Readings

#### Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.

#### Hebrews 2:9-11

He who "for a little while" was made "lower than the angels," that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

#### Mark 10:2-16 or 10:2-12

[Jesus said,] "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female....So they are no longer two but one flesh."

In fact, Jesus does the same thing in Mark's Gospel. When the Pharisees question him on divorce, Jesus refers them to God's original plan: "But from the beginning of creation..." (10:6). Jesus finds the answer to this challenging question by looking back at God's creative plan for humanity. God has given man and woman to one another as a mutual gift. It is not good that man should be alone, but only God in eternity definitively satisfies the original loneliness found in everyone's heart.

When spousal love breaks down, we would be wise to follow Jesus' advice and refer to God's original plan. Saint John Paul II did that when, in contemplating married love, he dedicated the first years of his Wednesday audiences to reflect on the first three chapters of Genesis.

Those God has placed alongside us, especially our spouses, are meant to wonderfully (but only partially) satisfy that deep longing to be totally accompanied. Mutual self-giving and self-sacrifice in love is the solution to our inherent isolation and loneliness. +

*When spousal love breaks down, we would be wise to follow Jesus' advice and refer to God's original plan.*

### A Word from Pope Francis

In the first reading we also hear that God was pained by Adam's loneliness....God did not create us to live in sorrow or to be alone. He made men and women for happiness, to share their journey with someone who complements them, to live the wondrous experience of love.

Homily, October 4, 2015



- Do I look for others to satisfy a part of me that only God can satisfy?
- Do I celebrate all the good things my spouse or loved ones offer me? Do I thank them?

# Hard Choices

By Kathleen M. Basi

Faith and politics—are there any two words in the English language that are more fraught with the potential to divide?

In the United States last year, we went through a heartbreakingly ugly presidential primary and convention season, only to be thrust into an equally disgusting general-election fight that extended into the post-election—more than a year in which the *modus operandi* seems to be: “Say whatever you want, whether it’s true or not, because all things are justifiable in the pursuit of winning.”

When faith intersects with politics, we are faced with hard choices. No party, no candidate, represents the totality of the Catholic faith. No party holds a moral high ground; the bending of truths and the oversimplification of issues is a near-universal characteristic of political rhetoric, and all party platforms contain positions that are inconsistent with the teachings of Christ.

Candidates often tell us we stand at a point of no return—that if we don’t get the “right” result, our country is lost. And for this reason, we tolerate the behaviors, the shredding of opponents’ human dignity, the dishonesty, and the trash talking that stand diametrically opposed to the Ten Commandments. Even worse, we participate in them.

Most of us don’t want to own our guilt. We’d rather blame the system. If we take an honest look in the mirror, though, almost all of us are part of the



problem. Too often, the tone of our comments on social media and in our safe zones, among those who think like we do, mirrors the un-Christlike ugliness exhibited in direct mail, TV ads, and speeches. We fail to hold our candidates—even the ones we know personally—accountable for the tenor of the discussion. Then, too, there are the articles and editorials we choose to share. It’s easy to hide behind them, to let an author take the blame and refuse the responsibility we incur by spreading his or her influence.

The truth is, there is no one “point of no return.” We face crossroads every day, every election season, and in every conversation about social, economic,

and governmental affairs. At each one, we make a choice to put our faith in the driver’s seat—or to make a particular political party, candidate, or issue our god.

In future elections, we, as individual followers of Christ, must decide whether to condone the false absolutes, the polarization, and the dehumanization that have come to characterize our political process, or to hold ourselves and all our leaders accountable to the standard set by Jesus.

We all have a choice to make. What will you choose? +

*No party, no candidate, represents the totality of the Catholic faith.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, I am grateful for childlike innocence. Help me to be more aware of and responsive to the needs of little children.*

*From Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney*

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 4–9

**Monday**, St. Francis of Assisi:  
Jon 1:1–2:2, 11 / Lk 10:25–37


**Tuesday**, Weekday:  
Jon 3:1–10 / Lk 10:38–42

**Wednesday**, Weekday:  
Jon 4:1–11 / Lk 11:1–4

**Thursday**, Our Lady of the Rosary:  
Mal 3:13–20b / Lk 11:5–13

**Friday**, Weekday:  
Jl 1:13–15; 2:1–2 / Lk 11:15–26

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
Jl 4:12–21 / Lk 11:27–28

Bringing Home  
the Word 

October 3, 2021

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