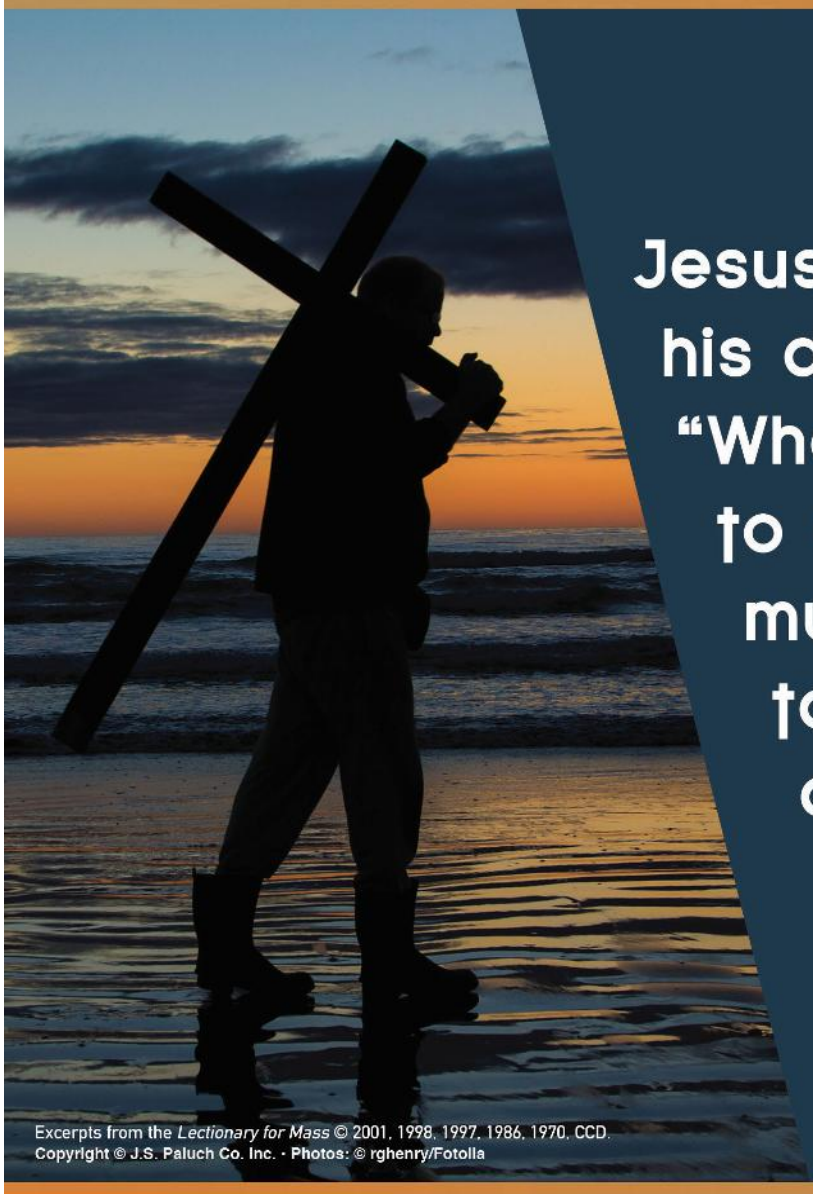
Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time



Jesus said to
his disciples,
"Whoever wishes
to come after me
must deny himself,
take up his cross,
and follow me."

Matthew 16:24

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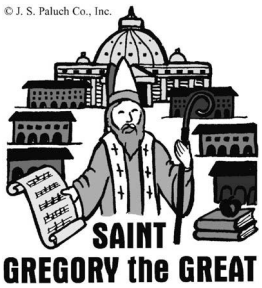
AUGUST 30, 2020

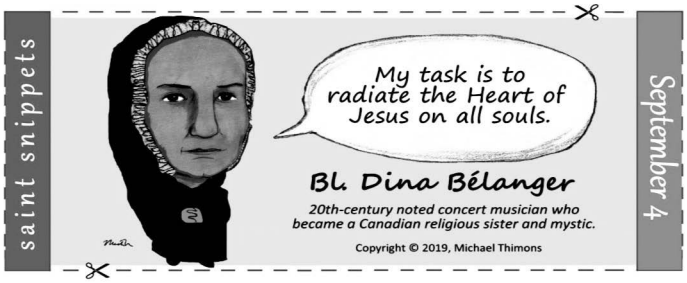
Saint Gregory The Great (540-604)

September 3



Imagine, fourteen hundred years after death, boasting a best-selling CD! Yet outside the Church and within, Gregorian chant is enjoying a renaissance. Still, the timeless sacred music that bears his name is but part of Gregory's legacy. Renouncing civic service for monastic life, Gregory's administrative and diplomatic skills prompted continual summons from the cloister. Papal ambassador and advisor, he was eventually elected pope himself, renowned as a wise steward of the church's material possessions, generous benefactor of the poor, sponsor of missionaries, and promotor of monasticism. His liturgical enrichment of the Church endures not only in Gregorian chant, but in eloquent homilies still gracing the Liturgy of the Hours, the "Gregorian Canon" (Eucharistic Prayer I), and his spiritual classic, Pastoral Care, once presented to new bishops at ordination. Of countless impressive papal titles—Supreme Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles—the title still so cherished that it heads official documents is the one Gregory coined to describe his papal ideal: Servant of the Servants of God. Together with being designated "the Great," a fitting epitaph.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



The Cross of Jesus

The perception of a cross changed dramatically after Jesus' crucifixion. Before that event, death on a cross was not only horrible, it was degrading. It was a penalty reserved only for the most wretched of criminals. The word "glory" would not have found its way into the same sentence containing the word "cross." But all that changed with Jesus. Over time, believers began to venerate and honor the cross. They painted, sculpted, and carved images of it. Many lost their own lives for their association with it. Today our reverence for and relationship with the cross recalls little of the contempt originally associated with it. As it has been through the ages, it is our perception of the cross that determines how we follow Jesus.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	1 Cor 2:1-5; Ps 119:97-102; Lk 4:16-30
Tuesday:	1 Cor 2:10b-16; Ps 145:8-14; Lk 4:31-37
Wednesday:	1 Cor 3:1-9; Ps 33:12-15, 20-21; Lk 4:38-44
Thursday:	1 Cor 3:18-23; Ps 24:1bc-4ab, 5-6; Lk 5:1-11
Friday:	1 Cor 4:1-5; Ps 37:3-6, 27-28, 39-40; Lk 5:33-39
Saturday:	1 Cor 4:6b-15; Ps 145:17-21; Lk 6:1-5
Sunday:	Ez 33:7-9; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Rom 13:8-10; Mt 18:15-20

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Tuesday:	World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
Thursday:	St. Gregory the Great
Friday:	First Friday
Saturday:	First Saturday; Blessed Virgin Mary

Traits Of A Teacher

All who undertake to teach must be endowed with deep love, the greatest patience, and, most of all, profound humility. The Lord will find them worthy to become fellow workers with him in the cause of truth.

—St. Joseph Calasanz

Presence

Wherever you see another, there I am.

—Rabbinical saying

Today's Readings

First Reading — The name of the LORD has become like fire burning in Jeremiah's heart (Jeremiah 20:7-9).
Psalm — My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God (Psalm 63).
Second Reading — Be transformed; renew your mind; discern what is good (Romans 12:1-2).
Gospel — Those who lose their lives for Jesus' sake will find them (Matthew 16:21-27).

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Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 30, 2020

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.
—Romans 12:2

Treasures From Our Tradition

We know for certain that the sacrament of penance was a fairly rare event in the life of a Christian in the early centuries, but that everyone had a duty to admit their sins and ask forgiveness before giving thanks in the Sunday Eucharist and receiving Christ's Body and Blood at the table. Everyone today is familiar with this same ancient pattern. We also know about Lent and its journey of renewal, and even those who are returning from summer vacations may speak of a fresh perspective on life and a resolve to do better. Saint Augustine spoke of a third kind of penance, beyond the turning of the catechumens to a different life, beyond the normal everyday fresh starts, to a form that is severe and serious. Certain sins broke faith with the community: the sinners were obliged to give their names to the bishop and were barred from participation in the Eucharist. Augustine mentioned sacrilege, adultery, and murder as the culprits, great wounds for the perpetrator, wounds that were serious, deadly, mortal. Penance was such a frightening prospect that many people delayed their baptism for fear that they would sin, a practice with which Augustine was well acquainted. Pastoral need would eventually call the church to reconsider its practice.
—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co

We are invited to reflect on the path of discipleship offered by Jesus in our readings today. Jesus, now seen by the disciples as Messiah and Christ, begins to describe most fully what this means: he will not march into Jerusalem filled with God's power like a conquering general. His path is like that of Jeremiah; he will be rejected and mocked. His path is like that described by Paul, offering his body as a living sacrifice. Jesus summons his followers down the same path of death and resurrection, to live the radical paradox that "whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Loving and trusting God will entail self-surrender, leading us to joy in service to others. We will learn to let go of what we desire and what we think we need, trusting God to provide what we truly need.

The Tempter

It seems that Jesus is pretty hard on Peter in today's Gospel, when he calls him "Satan" for questioning Jesus' prediction of his passion. The scene echoes Matthew's story of the temptations of Jesus (4:1–11) when Jesus encounters Satan, also called the "tempter." Satan had sought to draw Jesus into thinking about his own needs instead of attending to God's purposes. Peter was an unwitting tempter, anxiously reacting out of his own fears and misunderstanding.

This story speaks about Jesus' identity and vocation, and also about our own. As God's beloved, sent out to witness to the gospel, we are offered a foundation and a purpose to our lives. There is much in life that tempts us, stirs up false fears, or draws us to the attractive but superficial. Jesus provides us a way forward. He named the temptations that he faced, so they had no power over him. As he followed his path, he placed his full trust in his Father.

God Of Dialogue

Our reading from Jeremiah contains some of the harshest language you will find in the Bible toward God. In despair and fury, Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving and abusing him. He pours out his rage at God for ruining his life. He wants to quit God, but finds it impossible. In later verses, he alternates between giving thanks to God and wishing he had never been born. Remarkably, after all this, Jeremiah resumes his prophetic ministry.

As with Abraham (Genesis 18), Moses (Exodus 32), Job, and various psalms, Jeremiah pushes back against God. God receives and blesses their prayer, and their relationship is stronger for it. Our God is a God of dialogue, who encourages us to speak our mind and heart in full honesty. Our Trinitarian God is in eternal conversation within God's self, and with all of creation. God invites honest dialogue, always grounded in love, within God's Church, and between the Church and the world.

Today's Readings: Jer 20:7–9; Ps 63:2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9; Rom 12:1–2; Mt 16:21–27

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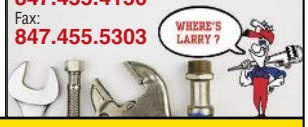

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