



JUST A GUY IN THE PEW
THE NARROW ROAD.

AUGUST 2021 | COURAGE

*In loving memory of Bill Platten.
A leader, a mentor, a friend.*



THE NARROW ROAD

THE EVERYDAY GUIDE FOR THE EVERYDAY GUY



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRACE

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
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10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
16									
17									
18									
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THE VIRTUE OF COURAGE

Brothers, I don't know if there is a virtue out there that the men of our faith need right now more than the virtue of courage. You don't have to spend a lot of time looking at today's world to realize it needs men to stand up for what is right. Today's culture is moving further and further away from the Christian values that defined it for so long. We have all seen the fallout within our countries, our families, and our faith because of it. Now, more than ever, we need Catholic men to courageously take a stand, be different, and show the world there is a better way.

Our faith has always flourished from the boldness of courageous men who weren't afraid to stand in the face of peril for what they believed in. The story of David and Goliath has always been one of my favorites and is one that elicits in me the desire and call to be courageous. We all know the story. The army of Israel was in a standoff with the army of the Philistines. There was Goliath, a nine-foot giant of a man, with massive armor and weaponry mocking the armies of Israel. The Bible tells us the men of Israel were "stunned and terrified." Here were all these trained soldiers shaking in their boots at the idea of having to face this giant one-on-one. Then, David arrives on the scene on an errand from his father to bring food to his brothers and gain news of the fight. He overhears Goliath mocking the army of God. David replies "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should insult the armies of the living God?" He decides to take a stand and volunteers to fight Goliath. He is brought before King Saul where he is basically asked if he is nuts. When Saul tells David all the reasons he cannot possibly fight Goliath (his youth, his inexperience as a soldier, his size, etc.), David replies, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a sheep from the flock, I went out after it and attacked it, and rescued the sheep from its mouth; and when it rose up against me, I grabbed it by its mane and struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." And David continued, "The Lord who saved me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will save me from the hand of this Philistine." David then goes out to meet Goliath where he is met with more ridicule. Goliath mocks him saying, "Am I a dog that you come at me with a staff?" At this point, David responds in a way that should give us all a clue in where our courage should come from. He replies, "You come against me with sword and spear and scimitar, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have insulted. Today the Lord shall deliver you into my hand." With that, they engage in battle and David slays Goliath.

My brothers, this story should inspire all of us. It should show us without a doubt that our courage has to come not from us, but from God above. David was anointed. He

knew and loved the Lord. It is because of this anointing, this knowledge and love of the Lord, that David was able to slay Goliath. It is the same reason you will be able to slay your own Goliaths. You have been chosen by God. You were anointed with the Holy Spirit at your baptism. You have the same power and permission David had to stand up for the Lord and our faith. Your world, your family, and your life is full of Goliaths sent by the devil to mock and destroy what God has worked so hard to create in them. That is why we all need to strive to become like David. We need to be men filled with the courage provided by the Holy Spirit, who are willing to stand up to the Goliaths that lay in wait to attack our wives, our children, and our faith. We are the first line of defense. We were created to be the spiritual leaders of our church and our family. We must courageously stand up and be different in a world that wants more of the same.

Each day we are presented with ways in which we can be courageous. Maybe it starts off with something as simple as praying with your family in public over a meal. Maybe it is walking away from friendships and relationships that are harmful to your walk in the faith. It might be taking a stand against the popular opinion when you know it contradicts the morals of the faith. We must have our eyes open each day for opportunities God is presenting for us to boldly live the faith. These are opportunities to evangelize and courageously live in a manner that shows people there is a better way of life waiting in Jesus Christ. Jesus is depending on us to be bold. He is counting on us to be brave. Right now, today, let us start praying for the courage to openly and publicly live out our faith so that we may be the light in the world the Lord calls us to be. Let's make the choice today to be courageous disciples for our God, our families, and our neighbors. Always remember, when you face these battles you aren't facing them alone. Like David you also "come in the name of the Lord". Good luck this month, brothers. Know that I stand beside you praying and working to grow in the virtue of courage.

**In Christ,
John**

VIRTUE PLAN FOR THE MONTH

VIRTUE: COURAGE

MOTTO:

"Take courage! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

ROOT SIN:

Fear

WHERE DO I SEE THIS SIN IN MY LIFE?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PLAN TO FORM COURAGE

WEEK 1: Courage and God

WEEK 2: Courage and My Wife

WEEK 3: Courage and My Children

WEEK 4: Courage and My Neighbor

SAY THE PRAYER FOR COURAGE

Dear God, give me courage, for perhaps I lack it more than anything else.
I need courage before men against their threats and against their seductions.
I need courage to bear unkindness, mockery, contradiction.
I need courage to fight against the devil, against terrors and troubles, temptations, attractions, darkness and false lights, against tears, depression, and above all fear.
I need Your help, dear God. Strengthen me with Your love and Your grace.
Console me with Your blessed Presence and grant me the courage to persevere until I am with You forever in heaven.

WEEK 1 REFLECTION:

COURAGE AND GOD

One of the scariest things for men can be the idea of fully surrendering their life to Jesus Christ. Men love control because it gives us a sense of security. We want to be in the driver's seat of everything in our lives. We think that if we are in control of everything we can see and prepare for all the good and bad things heading our way. The idea we have control over our lives is an illusion. It is one that the devil has placed in front of us and uses as a veil to cover our eyes from the truth. The idea of surrendering our lives to Christ in the least little bit sends fear coursing through our bodies. Ultimately, it means we have to place our trust in someone else. It is because of our wounds that this very notion paralyzes most men.

Not only are we afraid of surrendering our lives to Jesus, but we are also afraid that if we do, we will face rejection. There is an underlying fear in all of us that Jesus won't like what he sees. As soon as we allow the thought of surrender, the devil sounds the alarm and starts to fill a man with lies and accusations about who he is. He begins to convince us there is no way God would want anything to do with us. He dredges up all your shame, all your sins, and all your faults and failures in an effort to keep you in the virtual prison cell he built for you. In this prison cell, you will find four walls made up of all the shame and lies you believe about yourself. Make no mistake, the devil wants to paralyze you with fear so you stay under his influence and in his control; the same control you thought for so long was yours.

There is also the fear we will lose something in surrendering to Christ. Maybe we fear losing friends, our reputation, and our very selves. The devil preys on this fear to keep you from opening the door of that prison cell. He convinces you surrendering to God is betraying yourself and that somehow you will no longer be able to be who you are. This can lead to the belief that the only thing waiting for you outside of that cell door is the pain of slavery to a domineering and demanding God. Brothers, this is the furthest thing from the truth. I would contend that no one knows who you are supposed to be better than the One who created you. What you will gain will far outweigh what you might have to give up.

Men, we have to be courageous in trusting God. We have to be the ones who take that first step. God isn't going to force any of us to follow Him. He loves us too much for that. We have free will, and it is up to us to make the courageous choice to follow Him. I am not going to lie to you. It is hard. There are pains and wounds you have to confront from your past and present life on the journey. However, what waits for you on the other side is a life full of joy, passion, and purpose. God tells us in Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." It's time to believe in Him. It's time to be done with fear. Today, make the courageous choice to surrender your life more fully to Christ.

WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 1, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Have courage, trust in God, St. Joseph and our Blessed Mother, and you need have no fear."

— St. Mary MacKillop



GOSPEL

JN 6:24-35

So when the people saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Caper'na-um, seeking Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

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WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 2, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to abandon ourselves unreservedly, so that we might be molded by God's grace, even as we cannot see where that path may lead us."

— St. Ignatius Loyola



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF COURAGE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY COURAGE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 3, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

— Joshua 1:9

SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 14:22-36

Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennes'aret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent round to all that region and brought to him all that were sick, and besought him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

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WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 4, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

— St. Francis of Assisi



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 15:21-28 MEMORIAL OF SAINT JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY COURAGE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 5, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Let nothing frighten you. Who has God, lacks nothing. God alone is enough."

— St. Teresa of Avila



GOSPEL

MT 16:13-23

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY COURAGE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 6, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Grace and truth will in turn give rise to courage. Following Christ has always demanded courage."

— St. John Paul II



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MK 9:2-10 FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah." For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

[illegible]

WEEK 1: COURAGE AND GOD

AUGUST 7, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Do not fear. Jesus is more powerful than all hell.”

— St. Pio of Pietrelcina

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 17:14-20

And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” And Jesus answered, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY COURAGE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 2 REFLECTION:

COURAGE AND MY WIFE

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

When most men think of courage and their wives, they think of standing up for her in some physical sort of way. They think of putting themselves between her and anyone who may bring her harm. They think of some movie scene moment where they can show their courage by stepping into the path of danger befalling their wife. Of course, this is certainly one way to live out the virtue of courage in your marriage. The problem is, more often than not, those moments don't come. Rather, it is in simpler moments and more intimate ways we can truly live out the virtue of courage with our wives.

Most women want to truly know and understand their husbands. They desire an intimacy with them that is outside of the bedroom. The problem is that most of us men are afraid to be vulnerable. We are afraid to let our guard down and share all of ourselves with our wives. We fear what they would think if they knew our deepest fears and inadequacies. There is a false notion that vulnerability is not part of masculinity. We fear intimacy, so we share a surface-level relationship with our wives and keep them at an arm's length. This is something our wives can pick up on, and it can often be a cause of division in marriage. We need to embrace the idea that the courageous thing to do in our marriage is to become vulnerable. We need to let our wives in. The last thing they will think is that it is less masculine. In fact, it will most likely give them the opposite impression and lead to more open lines of sharing and a deeper connection in the relationship.

St. Paul gives us another way we can be courageous with our wives in Ephesians 5:25. He writes, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Paul is calling men to lay down their lives for their wives. We do that by having the courage to set aside our own selfish wants and needs so we can seek to serve our wives. This can be one of the hardest things to do, and sometimes the belief that our wants and needs will be cast aside and left unmet keeps men from doing this. Selfishness and immaturity abound, and we begin to believe we can never be happy when our needs aren't immediately met. However, the very opposite is true. When we have the courage to serve our wives with vulnerability and selflessness, most often we will find our wives trying to do the same. Good begets good. When someone is being served in this manner, they feel a desire in their own hearts to serve. It's how marriage is meant to work. The two become one in love and in selfless service. That is the place I think we all wish to be in marriage. Courage can help us to step outside of the selfish comfort zone most of us have grown so accustomed to.

My brothers, courage isn't just meant for the battlefield or in the movie scene moments of our lives. It is meant for choosing the harder road in the small choices of each and every day. Our wives need us to be the husbands and fathers Christ desires us to be. We are the spiritual leaders and protectors of our family. We have to learn the virtue of courage in the places that matter the most. There is no place where it matters more than in our relationships with our wives.

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 8, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point."

— C.S. Lewis

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 6:41-51

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 9, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Sin makes a man a coward; a life in the truth of Christ makes him bold."

— St. John Chrysostom



GOSPEL

MT 17:22-27

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed. When they came to Caper'na-um, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?" And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 10, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Do not fear, for I am with you; don not be dismayed, for I am your God."

— Isaiah 41:10



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

JN 12:24-26

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 11, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"To have courage for whatever comes in life, everything lies in that."

— St. Teresa of Avila

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

JN 18:15-20 MEMORIAL OF SAINT CLARE, VIRGIN

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 12, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong."

— 1 Corinthians 16:13

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 18:21-19:1

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him

who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan;

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 13, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Be brave, do not be led by what others think or say!"

— St. John Bosco



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 19:3-12

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

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WEEK 2: COURAGE AND MY WIFE

AUGUST 14, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections."

— St. Francis de Sales

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 19:13-15 MEMORIAL OF SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST AND MARTYR

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." And he laid his hands on them and went away.

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 3 REFLECTION:

COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

My good friend Bill Donaghy once shared an amazing image with me. It was a picture of a little girl kneeling and holding a flower in the middle of a field. The girl's gaze was placed squarely on the flower she was holding. She was smiling and focused on nothing but the flower. Around her, the sky was dark and there was fire raining down from the sky over and around her. The only reason she hadn't noticed is because her father stood behind her with one arm on her shoulder and the other holding a shield squarely over her head. The shield was protecting her from the fiery onslaught. The little girl hadn't taken her eyes off the flower to see the danger she was in or that her father was taking the brunt of the onslaught. The man was doing everything he could to keep his daughter safe from the unknown danger. I don't know if I have ever seen a more powerful image of what it means to be a father.

The most important role of a father is to be a protector of his children. This means protecting them both physically and spiritually. Most of the time when we think of protecting our children we think only of keeping them safe from the physical dangers of the world we live in. As we see in the description above, though, there are more things trying to harm our children than just the physical. The fire in the picture is unseen by the girl and represents the other great danger in our children's lives. It represents spiritual danger. Make no mistake about it. The devil wants your children, and he is coming after them everyday. So many children are left vulnerable and open to the attacks of the devil because they have fathers who are not spiritually leading their families. Kids are being left to themselves to spend hours on social media and the internet. Children as young as seven or eight have cell phones and devices that leave the door wide open for pornography and other temptations of the devil. Many of these things happen because men are afraid to tell their children no. They are afraid of their child being ridiculed for not having something other kids have. They are worried about being "those parents." So we allow our children to have everything everyone else says they should have instead of making courageous decisions that keep them safe. I have made mistakes like these myself, and I am working to rectify them with programs like Covenant Eyes and other options.

Men, we are leaving our children unprotected when we refuse to take up our God given role as the spiritual leader of the family. The numbers show when the father abdicates his role as the priest of the home, the children's chances of remaining in the faith on their own drop dramatically. When it is left up to the mother, less than 20% of children remain engaged in the faith. When the father is courageously leading, the number of children who remain engaged jumps to over 80%. This should tell us how important it is to courageously live our faith out each day. It is about more than just us. It's about protecting the souls of our children from the devil who never ceases in his pursuit of them. I don't care if your kids are five or forty-five. This is your God given role and is the most important thing you can do in your life. My brothers, this week, this month, heck the rest of our lives, let us boldly make the courageous decision to stand between evil and our children. My prayers are with you!

WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 15, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"The principal act of courage is to endure and withstand dangers doggedly rather than to attack them."

—St. Thomas Aquinas



GOSPEL

LK 1:39-56 SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechari'ah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 16, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Pray! Pray, but with faith – with living faith! Courage! Onward, ever onward!"

—St. John Bosco

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 19:16-22

And behold, one came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF COURAGE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 17, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Though the path is plain and smooth for men of good will, he who walks it will not travel far, and will do so only with difficulty, if he does not have good feet: that is, courage and a persevering spirit.”

—St. John of the Cross

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 19:23-30

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Then Peter said in reply, “Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first.

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

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WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 18, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Have the courage to go against the tide of current values that do not conform to the path of Jesus."

—Pope Francis



GOSPEL

MT 20:1-16

For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

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WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 19, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Even if I must suffer greatly, thanks be to God’s mercy, I will not lack courage.”

—St. Genoveva Torres Morales



GOSPEL

MT 22:1-14

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

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WEEK 3: COURAGE AND MY CHILDREN

AUGUST 20, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"It is not those who commit the least faults who are the most holy, but those who have the greatest courage, the greatest generosity, the greatest love, who make the boldest efforts to overcome themselves, and are not immediately apprehensive about tripping."

—St. Francis de Sales

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 22:34-40

MEMORIAL OF SAINT BERNARD, ABBOT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sad'ducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

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AUGUST 21, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Courage and confidence! I cannot repeat this war-cry too often. We should make it our support in our life of conflict.”

—St. Madeleine Sophie Barat



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 23:1-12 MEMORIAL OF SAINT PIUS X, POPE

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

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WEEK 4 REFLECTION:

COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

Out of all the places in our lives where we need to be courageous, doing so with our neighbor might just be the most challenging to us. This is where the rubber meets the road. Jesus gave us all the mission of going out into the world to make disciples. This direction can be hard for most men. It doesn't have as much to do with whether or not you are an extrovert or an introvert. It has more to do with the fears of rejection, losing relationships, or being labeled in a certain way. These fears keep men from courageously answering the call to evangelize.

The world we live in today makes this even harder. Society is more concerned about being politically correct than carrying out our moral responsibility as Christians. Cancel culture and woke-ism wait for anyone who dares to speak out against the cultural norm. The devil is using all of this to strike fear into the heart of any disciple who even considers spreading the Good News by reaching out to a neighbor. This should not trouble us as much as it does. Think about it. Jesus warned us this would happen in the Scriptures. In John chapter 15, Jesus tells the disciples, "If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke to you, 'No slave is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." We have to remember we no longer belong to the world. The moment we truly gave our hearts to Jesus we became his and with that came the responsibility of carrying the Cross. When we keep our eyes fixed on Christ and his purpose for our lives, we can find the courage we need to fulfill our mission. We begin to see the joy that comes from standing out and being different. Our eyes and hearts open to see the way of the world is not our way.

To be different in a world that wants more of the same is the call of the Catholic man. You were sent here to save souls and be a light in the darkness. It's time to cast off the fears we have about boldly living the faith. It is time to cast off the bushel basket the world has placed over us. When 12 men received the power of the Holy Spirit and made the decision to boldly live the faith, the world changed forever. Twelve men with no technology, no means of quick travel, and no mass media changed the world. Imagine all the wondrous things you could do today with all you have at your disposal. Imagine thousands of Catholic men today, boldly living the faith in the way Jesus called them to live. If we each start asking for courage and grace from the Holy Spirit, we won't have to imagine. It would become a reality. The ball is in our court, guys. It starts with each of us making the decision to courageously live the faith with our neighbors. If God is for us, who can be against us?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 22, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."

—2 Chronicles 15:7



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

JN 6:60-69

Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

[illegible]

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 23, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Courageously follow the path of personal holiness and diligently nourish yourselves with the word of God and the Eucharist. The holier you are, the more you can contribute to building up the Church and society.”

—St. John Paul II

SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 23:13-22

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 24, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"I am not afraid; I was born to do this."

—St. Joan of Arc



GOSPEL

JN 1:45-51 FEAST OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Philip found Nathan'a-el, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathan'a-el said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathan'a-el coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathan'a-el said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathan'a-el answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 25, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Have courage and do not fear the assaults of the Devil. Remember this forever; it is a healthy sign if the devil shouts and roars around your conscience since this shows that he is not inside your will."

— St. Pio of Pietrelcina



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 23:27-32

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 26, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

Let us fix our eyes on the crucifix in every difficult moment and that gaze will renew our courage.

—St. Madeleine Sophie Barat



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 24:42-51

Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

[illegible]

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 27, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

The worst enemy of a fragile faith is fear. Do not be afraid!"

—Pope Francis

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MT 25:1-13 MEMORIAL OF SAINT MONICA

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 28, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are anger and courage. Anger that things are the way they are. Courage to make them the way they ought to be."

—St. Augustine of Hippo



GOSPEL

MT 25:14-30

MEMORIAL OF SAINT AUGUSTINE, BISHOP AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

"For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my

coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

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ACTS OF COURAGE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 29, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Courage, courage, trust in God who helps you in all things."

—St. Mary MacKillop



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

MK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, observing the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they purify themselves; and there are many other traditions which they observe, the washing of cups and pots and vessels of bronze.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?" And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men."

And he called the people to him again, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him."

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 30, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Courage! Do not fall back."

—St. Joan of Arc

 SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

LK 4:16-30

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper'na-um, do here also in your own country.'" And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli'jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Eli'jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

WEEK 4: COURAGE AND MY NEIGHBOR

AUGUST 31, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you."

—Deuteronomy 31:6



SAY THE PRAYER OF COURAGE

GOSPEL

LK 4:31-37

And he went down to Caper'na-um, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath; and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And reports of him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HOW HAVE I SHOWN COURAGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,
Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being honored ,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being praised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being preferred
to others,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being approved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being despised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of suffering rebukes,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being calumniated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being forgotten,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being ridiculed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being wronged,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being suspected,
Deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others
may increase and I may decrease,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and
I unnoticed,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me
in everything,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as
I should,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

THE LITANY OF TRUST

From the belief that I have to earn
Your love,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that I am unlovable,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the false security that I have what
it takes,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that trusting You will leave
me more destitute,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From all suspicion of Your words
and promises,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the rebellion against childlike
dependency on You,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From refusals and reluctances in
accepting Your will,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From anxiety about the future,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From resentment or excessive
preoccupation with the past,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From restless self-seeking
in the present moment,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From disbelief in Your love and presence,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being asked to give
more than I have,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the belief that my life has no
meaning or worth,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of what love demands,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From discouragement,

Deliver me, Jesus.

That You are continually holding me
sustaining me, loving me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your love goes deeper than my sins
and failings, and transforms me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That not knowing what tomorrow brings is
an invitation to lean on You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That you are with me in my suffering,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my suffering, united to Your own, will
bear fruit in this life and the next,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will not leave me orphan, that You
are present in Your Church,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your plan is better than anything else,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You always hear me and in Your
goodness always respond to me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me the grace to accept
forgiveness and to forgive others,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me all the strength I need for
what is asked,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my life is a gift,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will teach me to trust You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You are my Lord and my God,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That I am Your beloved one,

Jesus, I trust in you.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

A photograph of two men sitting at a wooden table in a cafe, engaged in conversation. The man on the left is wearing a blue plaid shirt and holding a red mug. The man on the right is wearing a grey sweater and gesturing with his hands. In the background, there are shelves with books, a sign that says "LOCAL", and large windows. A blue and yellow curved graphic element is at the bottom left.

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