

## THURSDAY, October 1

Therese of Lisieux

**Mark 9:22.** *It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.*

*Ps 105:1-22 \* 105:23-45 | Hosea 5:8—6:6 | Acts 21:27-36 | Luke 6:1-11*

### From the Archives: April 7, 1954

If, in the face of religious doubts and difficulties, we yield to the temptation to abandon what faith we have, what we are really saying is, "If I can't understand everything, I won't try to understand anything. If I can't believe everything, I won't believe anything. For me it is all or nothing." But to take that desperate attitude is not the way we act about anything else in life, and there could be no more fatal mistake than to act thus in our relations with God.

Surely for every one of us there are truths that we do believe, there are realities in our religious experience that we can trust. If we are faithful to these truthful insights and these highest moments in our lives, our fellowship with God in Christ will grow ever closer and deeper, for he is always ready to answer our prayers.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nasir (South Sudan),  
Agra (North India), and Indianapolis*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Commit to memorizing the first five verses of Psalm 105 this week.*

## FRIDAY, October 2

**Hosea 10:12.** *Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you..*

*Ps 102 \* 107:1-32 | Hosea 10:1-15 | Acts 21:37—22:16 | Luke 6:12-26*

We don't know much about many of the Old Testament prophets. Scripture doesn't detail Hosea's background and Elijah doesn't even have a job, much less a backstory. Amos apparently tended trees and flocks before being called to preach God's message to the powerful; Isaiah was just a small child when God called him. Their backgrounds aren't the important part of the story. Rather, what matters is their willingness to speak on behalf of God, for the love of God's people.

So, what does that mean for us? It means we matter to God, just as much as any political leader or thought influencer. God treats us all with equal measures of mercy and justice. This equality means we are all called to preach God's message to a world that needs it. This was revolutionary for the prophets, and it remains revolutionary for the church today.

*PRAY for the Archbishop of Canterbury*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Is the idea of God calling the very ordinary—even people like you—revolutionary in your mind?*

**SATURDAY, October 3***John Raleigh Mott*

**Acts 22:28.** *The tribune answered, "It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."*

*Ps 107:33-43, 108:1-6(7-13) \* 33 | Hosea 11:1-9 | Acts 22:17-29 | Luke 6:27-38*

Just after college, I spent two years teaching English in Seoul, South Korea. While I had traveled abroad, this was my first time to live overseas. One important thing I learned was not to take my US citizenship for granted. The privileges and power it provided were significant. I remember heatedly advocating for a female coworker because our boss had denied her time off to visit prospective in-laws—without giving her any reason. She was afraid of him, but I was angry—and I learned, when he relented, that my status really was radically different from hers.

In today's reading from Acts, Paul took advantage of his citizenship. He didn't do this immediately. He'd already been arrested and bound in chains and tried first to talk his way out of trouble. When his physical health was in danger, he made good use of his citizenship. It was a useful tool to avoid flogging, keep himself alive, and continue his God-given mission.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Natal (South Africa) and Aguata (Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How do you extend your privileges to others?*

**SUNDAY, October 4****18 Pentecost**

**Psalm 19:1.** *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork.*

*Ps 19 or Ps 80:7-14 | Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 or Isaiah 5:1-7  
Philippians 3:4b-14 | Matthew 21:33-46*

Sunsets in the desert can be spectacular. The sun emits colors across the spectrum; the different wavelengths of those colors make the sky appear blue during the day. As the sun sets, warmer shades of gold, orange, and red fill the horizon. The particular kind of light present at sunset and sunrise is highly prized by photographers like me who appreciate the golden glow.

It turns out that particle-heavy air (moisture or pollution) dilutes the vividness of the sunset's colors. This might be why modern city dwellers seldom see the heavens proclaiming the glory of God in the way the ancient children of Israel did. The dry, desert air made for stunning sunsets.

Our spiritual ancestors celebrated those sunsets as evidence of God's handiwork. If the fleeting sunset is such brilliant evidence of God's glory, how much more is the enduring beauty of a stone, a tree, or a human being?

*PRAY for the Diocese of Ahoada (Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Take a picture of something beautiful today and share it with a friend tomorrow.*

## MONDAY, October 5

**Luke 6:43.** *No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit.*

*Ps 106:1-18 \* 106:19-48 | Hosea 14:1-9 | Acts 22:30—23:11 | Luke 6:39-49*

Peaches are my favorite fruit. When my husband and I had been married about ten years, we took a trip together. When we got to our guest casita at a New Mexico hot springs, we began to unload the car. I handed him a peach that we had bought at a roadside stand, warning him to be careful not to bruise it. When I got into the room, it sat on a paper towel on the desk, with a note scrawled on the paper towel: Caution! Peach!

My husband understands how important good fruit is to me. Good fruit is important to Jesus too. He understands that the best indicator of the state of our heart is the treasure (or garbage) that comes from our mouths.

The memory of a perfect peach is a treasure of my heart, as are memories and thoughts of precious people and events in my life. Our hearts also hold less tangible treasures, like our attitudes, perspectives, and assessments—about ourselves, others, and all of creation.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Navajoland Area Mission,  
Aipo Rongo (Papua New Guinea), and Ajayi Crowther (Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Pack an extra piece of fruit to share with a friend.*

## TUESDAY, October 6

*William Tyndale*

**Acts 23:13-14.** *There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul."*

*Ps [120], 121, 122, 123 \* 124, 125, 126, [127]  
Micah 1:1-9 Acts 23:12-24 | Luke 7:1-17*

Paul has been causing all kinds of trouble in Jerusalem and the Roman tribune has had enough, so he sends Paul to Felix, the governor. In responding to this rumor of forty Jews lying in ambush to assassinate Paul, the tribune puts together a force more than ten times that size to protect his prisoner.

William Tyndale, whom we remember today, was also difficult for the powerful people of his day to manage. His English translation of the New Testament was smuggled into England and Scotland and promptly condemned as heretical. Tyndale persisted and was eventually condemned to death. Like Paul, Tyndale preached the gospel of Jesus, in the language of his people, to the end of his days.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Ndokwa (Nigeria) and Akobo (South Sudan)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Do some research on Paul and William Tyndale. In what other ways are they kindred spirits?*

## WEDNESDAY, October 7

*Birgitta of Sweden*

**Luke 7:33-34.** *For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"*

*Ps 119:145-176 \* 128, 129, 130 | Micah 2:1-13 | Acts 23:23-35 | Luke 7:18-35*

Early American evangelist Lorenzo Dow coined the phrase, "You're damned if you do and damned if you don't," condemning preachers who "make the Bible clash and contradict itself." Dow was a fascinating character who reminds me of John the Baptist. He never washed, his hair and beard never met a comb, and he traveled with a box of Bibles instead of luggage. But Dow was renowned for his spellbinding preaching and abolitionist stance, drawing immense crowds and pledging to return to the same place on exactly the same day the next year.

Jesus was also a wildly successful preacher and no doubt felt the weight of others' condemnation. Yet he didn't let that stop him from preaching his message and loving his neighbors, regardless of the consequences.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nebbi (Uganda),  
Akoko and Akoko-Edo (both in Nigeria), and Iowu*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Have you ever felt like you're in a no-win situation? How can the witness of Jesus offer you a way forward?*

## THURSDAY, October 8

**1 Corinthians 15:35-38.** *But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.*

*Ps 131, 132, [133] \* 134, 135 | Micah 3:1-8 | Acts 24:1-23 | Luke 7:36-50*

**From the Archive: May 18, 1954**

The New Testament insists on the resurrection of the body. It refuses to be carried away with the Greek belief in a "spiritual" immortality, whereby we "escape" the prison of the body. Food and digestion may belong to this earth, but the body belongs to Christ. The body has its place in the great design of redemption through the resurrection of Christ.

This means that though we shall not continue in this same physical body, we shall continue as the same person. In the next world we recognize our loved ones; we can be with them and love them and are with God and love him.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nebraska and  
Akot and Isiala-Ngwa South (both of Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Pray the evening prayer of Compline, which can be found on page 127 of The Book of Common Prayer or at [prayer.forwardmovement.org](http://prayer.forwardmovement.org).*

**FRIDAY, October 9**

*Robert Grosseteste*

**Psalm 141:3.** *Set a watch before my mouth, O LORD, and guard the door of my lips; let not my heart incline to any evil thing.*

Ps 140, 142 \* 141, 143:1-11(12) | Micah 3:9—4:5  
Acts 24:24—25:12 | Luke 8:1-15

I remember a time in college when I put my foot in my mouth. Our band was going on tour, and the band director announced the itinerary. He mentioned that we would be stopping in a little town called Boerne. I said, "Bernie? What the heck is in Bernie?" The quiet clarinetist next to me responded, "It's my hometown."

Oh, did I want to sink through the floor! But that taught me a lesson I haven't been able to forget. Whenever I prepare to speak, I hope my heart echoes—consciously or not—words like those of the psalmist: Please, God, help me to speak kindly and with curiosity instead of presumption or judgment.

I wonder if Nathaniel spoke with a similar tone when he responded to Philip about Jesus, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Fortunately, Philip's kind response was simply, "Come and see." Nathaniel did, and his life was transformed.

*PRAY for La Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How will you invite God to guard the door of your lips?*

**SATURDAY, October 10**

*Vida Dutton Scudder*

**Luke 8:21.** *But [Jesus] said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."*

Ps 137:1-6(7-9), 144 \* 104 | Micah 5:1-4, 10-15 | Acts 25:13-27 | Luke 8:16-25

Today we remember Vida Dutton Scudder (1861–1954). I learned about her when I lived in the Boston area and attended retreats at Adelynrood, the retreat center of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, of which Vida Dutton Scudder was a beloved member. The child of missionaries, Vida Scudder became a teacher at Wellesley College and was an avid social activist. She founded and championed a number of social and religious organizations that supported women, both socioeconomically and spiritually. She never quit her advocacy work, authoring sixteen books in her retirement years.

Clearly Vida Scudder heard Jesus' words and acted as part of his family. Honestly, her active and often combative life feels overwhelming to me. You and I may not be called to stand on the front lines—but we are each called to do something in response to God's word.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nelson (Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia),  
and Akure and Isiala-Ngwa South (both of Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How are you being called to live out God's love?*

**SUNDAY, October 11**

19 Pentecost

**Isaiah 25:4-5.** *For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.*

**Ps 106:1-6, 19-23 or Ps 23 | Exodus 32:1-14 or Isaiah 25:1-9  
Philippians 4:1-9 | Matthew 22:1-14**

Southern Arizona, where I live, has a similar climate to Isaiah's time and place. When I read this passage, I thought of our summer temperatures, which top out at more than 110 degrees Fahrenheit, and the microburst (downdraft) that recently tore through our neighborhood, flooding the desert and uprooting trees.

Many of the poor in Isaiah's day lived outdoors. Mild weather meant they could sleep under trees or in temple porticos, but extreme weather presented all sorts of dangers. No wonder they called upon God to provide refuge and shelter. No wonder the poor and homeless still do.

**PRAY for the Dioceses of Nevada and Alabama**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Make a donation of umbrellas or raincoats to your local shelter.*

**MONDAY, October 12**

Edith Cavell

**Micah 7:3.** *Their hands are skilled to do evil; the official and the judge ask for a bribe, and the powerful dictate what they desire; thus they pervert justice.*

**Ps 1, 2, 3, \* 4, 7 | Micah 7:1-7 | Acts 26:1-23 | Luke 8:26-39**

We learn about the abuse of power early. Playground bullies and manipulative childhood acquaintances use others' relative weakness and gullibility for their gain. As adults, we learn there are always unspoken expectations underlying every request, appeal, arrangement, and judgment we make.

As Christians, we believe life is not supposed to operate like this. However, as a society, we fail to execute justice, again and again—on our own behalf and on behalf of others.

Micah's message echoes across the ages because he believed that God's justice is timeless and always being brought forth. Micah's condemnation was clearly countercultural, yet he persisted—as we should today—because he believed that God's justice would eventually prevail.

**PRAY for Dioceses of New Busa (Nigeria), Alaska, and Albany**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *When have you succeeded in executing justice and using power well?*

## TUESDAY, October 13

**Acts 26:32.** *Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor."*

*Ps 5, 6 \* 10, 11 | Jonah 1:1-17a | Acts 26:24—27:8 | Luke 8:40-56*

For the last week or so, we have read in the Book of Acts about Paul's missionary journeys and the turmoil he caused by preaching about Jesus, which eventually led to his arrest. In today's lesson, we learn that the Roman authorities were willing to release Paul from prison, but he had appealed to Caesar. Once such an appeal was made, it could not be retracted. Paul's spur-of-the-moment solution to what felt like a life-threatening problem was no longer the great solution he had expected.

How many times are we like Paul? When we are afraid or under pressure, we make choices in the heat of the moment, failing to remember that we can rely on God.

I imagine Paul had a lot of time in a lot of holding cells to regret his rash words and reflect on how God had sustained him throughout his missionary journeys. Fortunately, God can and will make good use of all our choices: Paul eventually continued his ministry and witness in Rome.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of the New Guinea Islands (Papua New Guinea) and Algoma (Canada)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *When was the last time God's grace showed up when your great solution wasn't so great? Share that story today.*

## WEDNESDAY, October 14

*Samuel I.J. Schereschewsky*

**Luke 9:1-2.** *Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.*

*Ps 119:1-24 \* 12, 13, 14 | Jonah 1:17—2:10 | Acts 27:9-26 | Luke 9:1-17*

Jesus sends the twelve disciples to minister in his name, giving them the same power and authority! I find it startling that Christians don't talk more about how Jesus shared his healing power so freely with his followers—and how Jesus still shares this power, calling us to be a part of his healing ministry.

As brothers and sisters of Jesus and children of a loving God, we're all capable of miraculous acts—if we have faith. Each of us has different gifts. As followers of Christ, we are called to embrace God's gifts of healing and miraculous power—and share them with others.

How did we forget this? How did we lose our awareness of this beautiful gift—this same power and authority of Jesus? We need to remember, for we are all created in the image of God.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of New Hampshire and Isuikwuato (Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How is Jesus calling you to join in his ministry of healing? Pray about this over the next few days.*



**THURSDAY, October 15***Teresa of Avila*

**Galatians 6:14-17.** *May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.*

*Ps 18:1-20 \* 18:21-50 | Jonah 3:1—4:11 | Acts 27:27-44 | Luke 9:18-27*

**From the Archives: April 15, 1955**

In the vision of the cross, death loses all meaning for us since death is coupled to our rising up again. The spoils of Jesus' cross are ours.

When we seek the will of God in all things, we nourish the Christ-life within us. We conquer pain and death when we cease to fear these afflictions. The cross has become the very center of our lives because the cross reveals the nearness of God to us.

The cross among the lilies reminds us that suffering is the most divine element in our lives. There is healing happiness in the cross that we gladly accept. There is no other means for us to pass from our petty selfishness to the immortal and never-changing relationship of love with God.

**PRAY for the Dioceses of New Jersey, Amazon (Brazil), and Jabalpur (India)**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Read along with the psalm today. Where do you see your own spiritual journey in this psalm?*

**FRIDAY, October 16***Hugh, Nicholas, and Thomas*

**Ecclesiasticus 1:3.** *The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, the abyss, and wisdom—who can search them out?*

*Ps 16, 17 \* 22 | Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10, 18-27 | Acts 28:1-16 | Luke 9:28-36*

I'm fortunate to live within a day's drive of two abysses: Arizona's Grand Canyon and Wall Street, a desert pathway surrounded by vertical, towering orange walls on a well-traveled hike in Bryce Canyon, Utah.

It is virtually impossible to see Wall Street from the top of the canyon, but it takes less than half an hour's walk—descending 500 vertical feet—to reach it. Conversely, the river at the bottom of the Grand Canyon is visible from the top, but the trail to the bottom is more than eight miles long and the elevation drops 5,000 feet.

Some think of an abyss as bottomless, but even the deepest has a floor. What is challenging is understanding the true immensity of an abyss. This is Sirach's point. He equates an abyss with wisdom because, with both, we cannot grasp the whole. At any given time, we can only know in part. There is always more to see and learn.

**PRAY for the Church of the Province of Myanmar**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Are you facing an abyss of sorts in your own life? Pray for God's strength, courage, and patience to navigate through the known and unknown.*



**SATURDAY, October 17***Ignatius of Antioch*

**Luke 9:50.** *But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him; for whoever is not against you is for you."*

*Ps 20, 21:1-7(8-14) \* 110:1-5(6-7), 116, 117  
Ecclesiasticus 3:17-31 | Acts 28:17-31 | Luke 9:37-50*

Perhaps the United States of America has always been an antagonistic society, founded as it was on being against England, against monarchy. Certainly, contemporary American culture seems to thrive on choosing sides and defending them mightily—be it a baseball team, a political party, or a church denomination.

Jesus speaks up against exactly this kind of partisanship in today's reading. Jesus doesn't take sides—although he clearly has preferences. He is not against the powerful—unless they do wrong. Instead, he is for mercy, justice, righteousness, healing, wholeness, and fair treatment for all God's people. I imagine Jesus is thrilled that yet another of God's children is embracing our innate power to do good in the world.

***PRAY for the Dioceses of New Westminster (Canada),  
Amichi (Nigeria), and Jaffna (South India)***

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How is Jesus calling you to embrace your innate power for something rather than against? What will you choose?*

**SUNDAY, October 18****20 Pentecost**

**1 Thessalonians 1:2.** *We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers.*

*Ps 99 or Ps 96:1-9,(10-13) | Exodus 33:12-23 or Isaiah 45:1-7  
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 | Matthew 22:15-22*

More than twenty years ago, our baby grandson was diagnosed with stage-four neuroblastoma—a cancerous growth the size of a soda can in his fourteen-month-old abdomen. In addition to medical treatment, we rallied the prayer troops—in our church and around the world, as my husband reached out to all the extended family he knew through his genealogy research. A monk friend sat in our grandson's hospital room for hours, silently praying.

As I write this, our grandson is an active young adult with a job and a life—in large part, I believe, because of the dedicated, faithful life of prayer Paul models for us in his letters.

***PRAY for the Dioceses of New York and Amritsar (India)***

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How do you model a life of prayer? How has prayer changed your life?*

**MONDAY, October 19**

*Saint Luke (tr)*

**2 Timothy 4:7.** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

*Ps 147 or 147:1-7 | Ecclesiasticus 38:1-4,6-10,12-14  
2 Timothy 4:5-13 | Luke 4:14-21*

I recently led a workshop on spiritual autobiography as part of a daylong retreat on embracing mortality. The focus of this workshop was on the trajectory of our spiritual lives, our awareness of and attentiveness to God over the course of our lives, and our spiritual legacy.

I sent participants home with a handout suggesting several ways to explore and document aspects of their spiritual journey. One suggestion was to write their own spiritual obituary. In today's epistle reading, Paul seems to know his time is short. His letters form an integral part of his legacy, but they bear a much longer and deeper witness to his faith journey than an obituary would.

Ponder your own spiritual obituary. What are the important high points—both of God's presence and seeming absence in your life? What is your spiritual legacy?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Newala (Tanzania),  
Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands (North India), and Angola*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Carve out some time this week to learn more about spiritual autobiographies and how they can become tools for prayer and self-reflection.*

**TUESDAY, October 20**

**Luke 10:9.** *Cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."*

*Ps 26, 28 \* 36, 39 | Ecclesiasticus 6:5-17 | Revelation 7:9-17 | Luke 10:1-16*

So, where did Jesus get seventy followers? We tend to think there were just twelve disciples, but there were women following him too—and they weren't there to cook and clean. Several of the women who followed Jesus had money of their own and helped fund his ministry.

How did Jesus convince seventy additional followers—not just the fishermen, but other people, men and women—to give up their day jobs and go out teaching, healing, and proclaiming the reign of God? Why did they give up their safety and security? How did Jesus convince these growing numbers of people that they could heal others, just like he did?

Are we listening? This Good News isn't just "Go to church on Sunday" stuff. Jesus' message is meant to transform the lives of everyone who hears it!

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Newark and Newcastle (Australia)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How has a deeper relationship with Jesus transformed your life? How has it changed your relationships with others?*

## WEDNESDAY, October 21

**Psalm 38:18.** *I will confess my iniquity and be sorry for my sin.*

*Ps 38 \* 119:25-48 | Ecclesiasticus 7:4-14 | Revelation 8:1-13 | Luke 10:17-24*

Is confession becoming a lost art? We seem to have lost the ability or willingness to be vulnerable—before God and others—or with ourselves. We don't seem to recognize the value of opening our hearts and souls to God's great grace.

This doesn't mean we don't frequently say, "I'm sorry." I grew up internalizing the need to apologize for everything. When we were first married, I said the words to my husband all the time, about everything, regardless of whether I had power or agency over what had happened. It drove him crazy.

The word iniquity means gross injustice or a wicked act. Today we seem to apologize and ask forgiveness for all sorts of petty things. Instead, we need to confess the much greater sins to which we are blind because they have become socially acceptable—like using more than our share of earth's resources or treating others as anything less than beloved children of God.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Newcastle (England) and Ankole (Uganda)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Between now and Advent, talk to your priest, spiritual director, or other religious leader and schedule a time for Reconciliation of a Penitent, sometimes called the sacrament of confession.*

## THURSDAY, October 22

**Isaiah 1:18-20.** *Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

*Ps 37:1-18 \* 37:19-42 | Ecclesiasticus 10:1-18 | Revelation 9:1-12 | Luke 10:25-37*

**From the Archives: August 28, 1955/January 14, 1949**

What the prophets taught holds good. God is loving and merciful but God's purpose will not be balked. We ask: Why has the world fallen into such a fearful plight?

God answers not with mystery but with plain reason. Come and let us reason together. Do you accept the major premise? Do you believe in me and that I am the God of history? Do you refer to me your personal life and the acts that shape the history of your nation? The present state of the world is the direct result of people refusing me, rebelling against me. My promise still holds good: If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

God is the God of history. That should affect our politics, the way we think and vote, "lest haply we be found even to fight against God."

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Ngbo and Jalingo (both of Nigeria) and Antananarivo (Indian Ocean)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Do a little research on Ecclesiasticus (also called Sirach). Why do you think this book is important for us to read?*

**FRIDAY, October 23**

*Saint James of Jerusalem*

**Matthew 13:57b.** *But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house."*

*Ps 1 | Acts 15:12-22a | 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 | Matthew 13:54-58*

Today we remember James of Jerusalem, one of Jesus' brothers. Some believe that James was Jesus' biological brother, while others disagree. Nevertheless, James clearly knew Jesus as a very human brother, with faults and failings like his own. As it was for others in the small town of Nazareth, James struggled to imagine his brother as anything more than human.

This raises interesting questions for us. Did Mary and Joseph ever talk with their other children about the unusual events surrounding Jesus' conception and birth? Was Jesus their favorite? Did they have a hard time treating all their children equally?

What was it like for James to have his own brother appear alive before him, after a brutal and public execution? Clearly Jesus' post-resurrection appearance made a lasting impression on his brother because James became the leader of the infant church in Jerusalem.

*PRAY for the Church of Nigeria*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *What questions do you have about James or Jesus' family? Make a plan to research and discover the answers to your questions.*

**SATURDAY, October 24**

**Psalm 42:1.** *As the deer longs for the water-brooks, so longs my soul for you, O God.*

*Ps 30, 32 \* 42, 43 | Ecclesiasticus 15:9-20 | Revelation 10:1-11 | Luke 11:1-13*

We once lived on seven acres of high desert outside Silver City, New Mexico. One gift of living there was observing the abundant wildlife. A bobcat spent one afternoon resting under our tree. Another time I encountered a snake by our birdseed bin. In both cases, humans and wildlife moved on unharmed.

While we fed and encouraged the presence of birds, deer came through on a daily basis whether we wanted them or not. Deer would browse their way through our yard, munching as they went, stopping to drink their fill from our birdbath.

Water in the desert is precious. I believe one reason our house was a regular stop on the deer path was the presence of fresh water. We all long to quench our thirst with living water—animals and humans alike. Biologically, we can live only three days without water. So, I ask: How long can we really live without God?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Niagara (Canada), Antsiranana (Indian Ocean), and Jamaica & the Cayman Islands*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Make a donation of water to your local food pantry.*

**SUNDAY, October 25**

21 Pentecost

**1 Thessalonians 2:7.** *We might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children.*

**Ps 90:1-6, 13-17 or Ps 1 | Deuteronomy 34:1-12 or Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 | Matthew 22:34-46**

There's no question that Christianity is facing some serious challenges in the public sphere in the United States. As at other times in history, people in power have co-opted Christ for their own ends.

Paul gives us a recipe for a radically different approach, much more in keeping with Jesus' own ministry. Jesus never sought control or supremacy in the temple. Instead, he sought to inform its leadership through his teachings. In his own ministry, he focused on the needs of the people he met outside the temple courts, modeling a nurturing approach.

Because Paul followed Jesus, Paul didn't seek power. He didn't flaunt his status or his Roman citizenship. Instead, he sought to follow Jesus' example, focusing on the power of love rather than the love of power.

**PRAY for the Dioceses of Niassa (South Africa) and Aotearoa (Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia)**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How are you nurturing and nourishing the people in your life?*

**MONDAY, October 26**

Alfred

**Ecclesiasticus 19:10.** *Have you heard something? Let it die with you. Be brave, it will not make you burst!*

**Ps 41, 52 \* 44 | Ecclesiasticus 19:4-17 | Revelation 11:1-14 | Luke 11:14-26**

I love the humor in this line! Sirach admonishes us not to gossip—but he does much more. He offers us many practical suggestions in today's reading.

We all share stories—that's how we form bonds, strengthen communities, and claim what we stand for. Yet, told maliciously, stories can break bonds, shatter communities, and create patterns of resistance and resentment.

What would it be like to commit to not sharing what we hear about others, no matter how harmless it may seem? After all, how many people have inaccurately attributed famous quotes to Einstein and Gandhi? Adopting Sirach's practices could make us much quieter. It might also mean we'd have to read and think for ourselves. What if, like Sirach, we spent more time considering what is worth sharing and less time sharing what isn't?

**PRAY for the Dioceses of Nicaragua, Argentina,  
and Argyll & The Isles (Scotland)**

**MOVING FORWARD:** *Make a commitment to check the sources of information you share with your friend groups and social networks.*

## TUESDAY, October 27

**Psalm 45:17-18.** *In place of fathers, O king, you shall have sons; you shall make them princes over all the earth. I will make your name to be remembered from one generation to another; therefore nations will praise you for ever and ever.*

*Ps 45 \* 47, 48 | Ecclesiasticus 24:1-12 | Revelation 11:14-19 | Luke 11:27-36*

Have you ever heard of the Sasanian Empire? How about the Chola Dynasty? Know anything about the Empire of Trebizond? All of these ancient realms were more powerful than Israel ever was, yet they have been mostly forgotten in modern history.

Tiny, relatively powerless Israel has managed to remain alive in the hearts and minds of people across the globe, even after the temple is torn down and the land taken over by other nations. Despite diaspora, genocidal decimation, and unthinkable persecution across the ages, God has never abandoned Israel.

From enslaved people escaping Egypt to poor Galileans suffering from Roman oppression, the message of God's reign is one of deliverance. God has loved us fiercely. For that, we give thanks, worshiping God generation after generation.

*PRAY for the Diocese of the Niger Delta (Nigeria)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How are you passing your faith on to the next generation? Share this story with us by using #ForwardDayByDay.*

## WEDNESDAY, October 28

*Saint Simon & Saint Jude*

**Ephesians 2:14.** *For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.*

*Ps 119:89-96 | Deuteronomy 32:1-4 | Ephesians 2:13-22 | John 15:17-27*

It's hard for most of us to understand the enormous cultural gap between Jews and Gentiles in Jesus' day. Tax collectors were condemned for collaborating with the Romans—but not just for working with political oppressors. The condemnation was also for associating with unclean and sinful Gentiles.

How did Paul come to embrace such a radically different approach toward the two groups? He outlined his Jewish heritage in his letter to the Philippians, then quickly stated that knowing Christ superseded all that heritage. Perhaps through his experience on the road to Damascus, Paul came to the shocking realization that everyone is equal in God's sight. Paul was willing to be beaten and jailed for that belief. Can we do any less?

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nike and Jebba (both in Nigeria) and Arizona*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How have you seen Jesus bring peace to two separate groups or to separate ideas? What needs peace in your life?*

**THURSDAY, October 29**

*James and his Companions*

**Romans 15:13.** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Ps 50 \* [59, 60] or 103 | Ecclesiasticus 31:12-18, 25—32:2  
Revelation 12:7-17 | Luke 11:53—12:12

**From the Archives: November 2, 1955**

To know that the power behind the universe, the Lord of Creation, cares for us so much that he will suffer for us, and that he has put all his power in pledge to win and redeem us—that is the source of our abiding joy. And to know that however we may have ignored him or even defied him through our sin, if only we will repent, he is ready and eager to forgive and to welcome us home to restored fellowship. That is the source of our deep inner peace: to know that our ultimate destiny is in his hands, that he molds the course of history, and that he is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. God is the source of our invincible hope.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nimule (South Sudan),  
Arkansas, and Jerusalem (Israel)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *How might you express the importance of your relationship with God to God in prayer or action, today?*

**FRIDAY, October 30**

*Maryam*

**Luke 12:14.** *But [Jesus] said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"*

Ps 40, 54 \* 51 | Ecclesiasticus 34:1-8, 18-22 | Revelation 13:1-10 | Luke 12:13-31

When I graduated from college, I thought I wanted to become a college professor. I took two years off and taught English in South Korea. I learned a lot about the teaching profession—including that I do not like giving grades.

I didn't mind grading papers, noting what was factually incorrect or needed additional work. Instead, it was that less obvious but clear requirement that I, a person in authority, place people in a hierarchy, judging that one person is better than another.

I've since realized further nuances to this understanding, helped along by my spiritual guidance ministry. Each one of us brings different gifts, skills, experiences, and sense of self-worth to what we do. Everyone is equal in God's sight—and should be in mine, as well.

Living this out is not always easy, but it is my goal—and I am grateful for the example Jesus sets for us in today's gospel lesson.

*PRAY for the United Church of India*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *The next time you feel the urge to judge or grade someone, take an extra minute to pray for open eyes and a soft heart.*



## SATURDAY, October 31

*Psalm 55:5-6. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."*

*Ps 55 \* 138, 139:1-17(18-23) | Ecclesiasticus 35:1-17  
Revelation 13:11-18 | Luke 12:32-48*

I still remember the night we learned our grandson had cancer. The phone call woke us sometime after midnight. Our son was in tears, still at the hospital, barely able to speak the words, much less absorb their impact.

Fear and trembling overcame all of us in the weeks that followed. Over nine months of intensive treatment and countless days and nights in the hospital, I certainly wished at times to take wing, fly away, and hide—but sometimes we don't have that option. Sometimes we must persevere and face the horrors that arrive unbidden in our lives.

Thanks be to God, we have all survived. One important lesson I learned is that God is not found in flying away or hiding out. Instead, the Holy Spirit stands with us in the midst of the horrors, the pain, and the uncertainty, giving us the grace to persevere.

*PRAY for the Dioceses of Nnewi (Nigeria), Armagh (Ireland),  
and Johannesburg (South Africa)*

**MOVING FORWARD:** *When has the Holy Spirit given you grace to persevere?*

## PRAYERS

O GOD, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 815

O GOD, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 824

ALMIGHTY GOD, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 831

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### AUGUST



Beth Haun is the founder of *Pot Luck Mama*, a website for creative parenting. She and her family live in Georgia. Beth loves praying nature.

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Shirin McArthur is a spiritual guide, retreat leader, writer, and editor who loves the outdoors and worships at St. Philip's in the Hills in Tucson, Arizona.

## FOR TODAY

O God: Give me strength to live another day; Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties; Let me not lose faith in other people; Keep me sweet and sound of heart, in spite of ingratitude, treachery, or meanness; Preserve me from minding little stings or giving them; Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity; Open wide the eyes of my soul that I may see good in all things; Grant me this day some new vision of thy truth; Inspire me with the spirit of joy and gladness; and make me the cup of strength to suffering souls; in the name of the strong Deliverer, our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*—Phillips Brooks

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