



# Bringing Home the Word

*Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)*  
August 1, 2021

## Quit Grumbling!

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Grumbling is terrible. It spreads discontent, discouragement, a negative spirit. It tells others you are unhappy and tries to drag them down. The Israelites grumbled against Moses and, indirectly, against God. He had taken them from slavery, yes, but led them into the desert with poor food and continual wanderings. At least as slaves they had food to eat and knew where they were. The devil can also trick us into believing that Jesus has done us no favors in saving us from the slavery of sin and feeding us with the gospel as we wander after his will.

Jesus faces this shortsightedness. After he multiplies the bread and feeds the people, they follow him—but not because they want to convert and begin living the life of generosity. They follow him because they got their fill. They want a God that satisfies and takes care of them. They want a credit-card God, an unending source of funds to bail them out—not a God who offers salvation through conversion and generosity.

It is common to want a God who obeys us and not the other way around. Saint Jerome went into the desert, just like the Egyptians, to learn this lesson of humble obedience. Rather than grumble, he prayed for conversion. He learned that there is no doubt Jesus gives us all we could need, but we must expand our hearts and minds to receive it. Conversion is stretching our limits to the bountiful measure of God rather than grumbling and shrinking him to our miserly standards. +

*Some want a credit-card God, an unending source of funds to bail them out.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

Dear brothers and sisters who are ill, your sickness makes you in a particular way one of those “who labor and are burdened,” and thus attract the eyes and heart of Jesus. In him, you will find light to brighten your darkest moments and hope to soothe your distress. He urges you: “Come to me.”

—World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2020



## Sunday Readings

### Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

Here in the wilderness the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

### Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

You should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires.

### John 6:24-35

[Jesus said,] “You are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled.”

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I need a bit more time praying with God to learn and enjoy his ways?
- How can I accept all the good God gives me, and desire his will above my own?

# Prearrange My Heart

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

**M**y mother asked me to go with her to help prearrange her funeral. A little time has passed since she first asked. We haven't gone yet, so I've had some time to think about it. Slogans like, "Save now, rest in peace later," and, "We put them in the ground, no money down," and, "You only get one chance to make a lasting impression" have been running through my mind. You must have a sense of humor about this. I always smile when I see the sign for Burns Funeral Home & Crematory.

I understand that families can be especially vulnerable when they lose a loved one and that the argument in favor of prearrangements is heavily on the side of making important decisions about death and burial well in advance of that emotionally charged experience. It makes sense. The stress of planning will be over; attention can be given to other important details.

It also makes sense that prearrangement can help lock in the price of the burial and all that accompanies it. The idea of a payment plan, not having to pay out a large sum all at once, makes even more sense—and it's easy on the wallet. If death isn't imminent, plans can even be altered, sometimes without incurring any further expense. All good, financially sound ideas.

From a practical perspective, all that I've read makes me think we should do



this. After all, my mom wants to. Why not? But truth be told, I feel a lot of personal resistance. Not because I don't trust the funeral home. Or because I don't feel we'll get a good deal. It's not because I worry about the expense. And it's not because we haven't found the right funeral home.

I realize I'm resisting because I don't want to face the raw, heart-wrenching truth that someday my mom will die, and my brother and sisters and I will have to figure out what life will be like without her. The grace of that moment cannot be paid for in advance, neatly organized or prearranged.

Just thinking about mom's funeral has caused me to rearrange my thinking about death, my emotions, and my relationship with her. I'm thinking about life in a way I had not before. I find myself suddenly tangled up in the stages of loss and grief: denial, anger, bargaining, and all the rest. I wonder how long it takes to get to the singularly, unique experience of acceptance. And when she dies, what then? When death does come, the saving mercy of Jesus, for her and for us, is all that is truly prearranged. +

*Considering preparing for a funeral in advance stirs the emotions.*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, you are the bread of love, compassion, and peace. Strengthen me with this bread so I can serve others.*

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

## WEEKDAY READINGS

August 2–7

**Monday**, Weekday:

Nm 11:4b–15 / Mt 14:13–21

**Tuesday**, Weekday: Nm 12:1–13 /

Mt 14:22–36 or Mt 15:1–2, 10–14

**Wednesday**, St. John Vianney:

Nm 13:1–2, 25–14:1, 26–29a, 34–35 /  
Mt 15:21–28

**Thursday**, Weekday:

Nm 20:1–13 / Mt 16:13–23

**Friday**, Transfiguration of the Lord:

Dn 7:9–10, 13–14 / 2 Pt 1:16–19 / Mk 9:2–10

**Saturday**, Weekday:

Dt 6:4–13 / Mt 17:14–20

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