



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
August 25, 2024

Make Up Your Mind

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

One can say that life is a series of choices. You have to make up your mind; which shall it be? Some of these choices are insignificant: Red or green? Others are much more important. To what shall I commit my life? Shall I get married? There are some choices that are even more momentous: What kind of a person do I want to be—trustworthy or crafty? Should I even bother with God and religion?

Having spent a lifetime in the wilderness, the Israelites were poised in the land of the Amorites, ready to enter the land promised to them by God.

Sunday Readings

Joshua 24:1–2a, 15–17, 18b

[Joshua said,] “Choose today whom you will serve.... As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Ephesians 5:21–32 or 5:2a, 25–32

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her.

John 6:60–69

Simon Peter answered..., “You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”

Before they moved forward, a pressing decision had to be made. Which god were they going to worship? A Canaanite god who presumably made the land before them fertile and inviting? Or the God who delivered them from Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, brought them safely to this point, and yet with whom they quarreled throughout their wilderness sojourn? Joshua voiced his decision: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Jesus’ declaration of himself as “the bread of life” troubled many people (John 6:35). It was then, and still is today, a difficult saying. It was repulsive to many, and they thought that Jesus sounded blasphemous. Those who could not accept his claim left him. He asked his closest followers, as he asks us today: “Do you also want to leave?” Speaking for all, Peter replied: “Master, to whom shall we go?” (John 6:67–68). How might you answer? †

*To what shall I commit my life?
What kind of a person
do I want to be?*



A Word from Pope Francis

[The message of] Jesus throws us into crisis.... We should be worried if he does not throw us into crisis, because we might have watered down his message! And we ask for the grace to let ourselves be provoked and converted by his “words of eternal life.”

ANGELUS, ROME, AUGUST 22, 2021



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS



- Have I made any thing or anyone into a little god?
- What is one action I can take to make room for God?

The Women St. Paul Worked With

Fr. William J. Parker, CSsR

Saint Paul is sometimes referred to as the patron saint of everything. Paul referred to himself as “the servant of Jesus Christ.” His life and teachings reveal his passion to spread the faith across the globe. Paul’s letters reveal a complex side of the man. In them, we find the personal cost of his love for Jesus and the vibrant energy with which he engaged men and women as coworkers in this missionary endeavor.

It may come as a surprise to some that many of his closest coworkers and associates were women. One couple, Priscilla (also referred to as Prisca) and Aquila, shared a special relationship with St. Paul (1 Corinthians 16:19 and



Romans 16:3). He acknowledged the depth of his gratitude to them in the greetings he sent at the end of Romans: “Greet Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers

in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life” (Romans 16:3–4). Paul met them in Corinth where they were leather workers, as well as Christian converts. The term he used to describe them as fellow workers is the same he used to describe Timothy and Titus, who coauthored several of Paul’s letters. In another case, Paul commended Phoebe to the church in Rome; she may have brought the letter to the community on behalf of Paul (Romans 16:1–2). Paul referred to her as “deacon,” which is the same word he used for himself to mean “one who provides relief to others” (1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:1–11). Again in his letter to the Philippians, he pleaded with two women who are at odds in the community: Evodia and Synteché. He mentioned how they labored side by side with him (Philippians 4:2–3).

While Paul’s Jewish formation colored his considerations, he was also at home with the ministry and the advice of women and men he trusted. †



God of truth, open my heart and my mind to receive the hard truths and help me believe that these truths will set me free. Amen.

The Redemptorists

Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “Preparing for Our Final Journey: Life Is Changed, Not Ended”

As we think about preparing for death, unfinished business may come to mind. Some will mourn the missed adventures, the unread books, the unheard music, the unseen wonders of the world. We need not mourn these. Heaven will contain all of this and more. Perhaps there is other unfinished business. Is there a relationship that needs healing? An unspoken apology? A need for truth-telling if we have been deceptive, generosity if we have been selfish, words or gestures of affection if we have been distant? With the help of a confessor and the sacrament of penance, we may discern those areas of our lives that need mending. We still have time. Today. As St. Paul writes, “Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). †

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WEEKDAY READINGS

August 26–31

Monday, Weekday:
2 Thes 1:1–5, 11–12 / Mt 23:13–22


Tuesday, St. Monica:
2 Thes 2:1–3a, 14–17 / Mt 23:23–26

Wednesday, St. Augustine:
2 Thes 3:6–10, 16–18 / Mt 23:27–32

Thursday, Passion of St. John the Baptist:
1 Cor 1:1–9 / Mk 6:17–29

Friday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:17–25 / Mt 25:1–13

Saturday, Weekday:
1 Cor 1:26–31 / Mt 25:14–30

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