



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
September 6, 2026

Tweaked by God

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

While the Scripture readings this week remind us we are responsible for one another, do any of us really want someone serving as our conscience, telling us what to do? A national insurance company once aired a TV ad in which “Cynthia” takes it upon herself to make sure everyone is abiding by the established regulations of the subdivision. She checks to make sure everyone is breaking down cardboard, cuts down hanging flower baskets that do not meet standards, and takes a chainsaw to mailboxes that are even two inches too high.

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 33:7–9

I have appointed you as a sentinel for the house of Israel.

Romans 13:8–10

The commandments...are summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 18:15–20

[Jesus said,] “If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother.”

None of us want a “Cynthia” for a neighbor. It may be that it takes a community to raise a child, but once we become adults—well, thanks, but no thanks. So what do we do with these readings?

The gospel adds the ingredient of community to the “cake batter.” Praying with a faith community can help correct our personal opinions, remind us what we might be blind to, and broaden our vision by affirming that we are a part of a larger world, all from the perspective of faith.

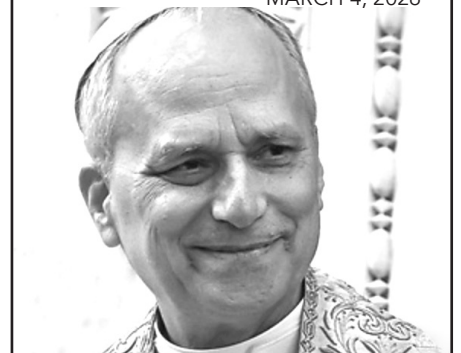
A faith community that reflects “Cynthia” thinking is a church that seeks to control. It motivates by fear, discourages prayerful reflection, and expects everyone to march in unison. A healthy faith community is a church that respects everyone as serious individuals of faith, encourages study and dialogue to seek out truth, and recognizes that growing in faith occurs in different ways. Prayerful, respectful communities of faith are how God tweaks our lives. †

***Praying with a faith
community can broaden
our vision.***

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

The Church is at the same time an earthly community and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual mystery, a reality present in history and a people journeying toward heaven (*Lumen Gentium*, 8; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 771). The human and divine dimensions integrate harmoniously, without one overshadowing the other.... [The Church] is a reality that is both human and divine.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
MARCH 4, 2026



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How does my faith community influence how I live?
- Do my actions reflect my beliefs?



What Is a Novena?

The Redemptorists

A novena is an ancient form of Christian prayer that expresses our steadfast trust in the power of prayer. A true sign of faith and an expression of love, a novena, or nine occasions of prayer, bears testimony to our human perseverance—a mere fraction of the infinite patience that God has for us! In the creation story in Genesis 1, God is pleased to see the seven-day handiwork of creation through to completion; likewise, our perseverance to see a novena through to its completion is cause for rejoicing in union with the Lord, for we are made in that same image of God, who took delight in the accomplishment of creation and who delights in our prayerful persistence.

Traditionally, a novena is a prayer or set of prayers repeated for nine consecutive days. However, a novena can just as well be accomplished in nine consecutive hours of one day or be spread out to include one day each week for nine consecutive weeks. For example, people who participate in the Eucharist on the first Friday of each month make a novena of First Fridays.

No fixed rules need to be set for making a novena, except to persevere in the prayer, so a novena is a good way to help us form the habit of regular prayer.

Novenas in honor of saints are moments of shared friendship with the court of heaven. Our friendship with a particular saint helps us live our lives steeped in deep love for God and neighbor. Like the saints, we strive to be a light in the world, bringing the compassion and love of God to all we meet on our journey of life. Through these prayers and devotions, we bring saints into our lives and share our needs and worries with them. We ask the saints to join their prayers with ours and, as we do, our friendship with them and with God grows. †

A novena is a good way to help us form the habit of regular prayer.

From *Catholic Novenas: A Classic Collection*, © 2026 Liguori Publications (828942). To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Gospel Values in an Election Year...and Beyond" by Fr. Kenneth R. Overberg, SJ
Valuing labor and especially the laborer has been a constant theme of Catholic Social Teaching from its beginning. In 1891, social issues included exploitation of the worker, terrible working conditions, and unjust wages (issues that remain just as pressing today). Through the years, Catholic Social Teaching has criticized both Marxism and capitalism. More recently, social issues have included globalization, the widening gap between rich and poor, and sinful social structures. From Pope Francis' address to congress on September 24, 2015: "In times of crisis and economic hardship, a spirit of global solidarity must not be lost.... The fight against poverty and hunger must be fought constantly and on many fronts."

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Generous God, help us to accept others as we want to be accepted; to love as we want to be loved. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 7–12

Monday, Weekday: 1 Cor 5:1–8 / Lk 6:6–11

Tuesday, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Mi 5:1–4a or Rom 8:28–30 / Mt 1:1–16, 18–23 or 1:18–23

Wednesday, St. Peter Claver: 1 Cor 7:25–31 / Lk 6:20–26

Thursday, Weekday: 1 Cor 8:1b–7, 11–13 / Lk 6:27–38

Friday, Weekday: 1 Cor 9:16–19, 22b–27 / Lk 6:39–42

Saturday, Weekday: 1 Cor 10:14–22 / Lk 6:43–49



Catholic.
Pastoral.
Trusted.

© 2026 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. Scripture quotations in this publication are from *The New American Bible, Revised Edition*, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The quotations from Pope Leo XIV are printed with permission, copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione–Libreria Editrice Vaticana. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.