

17th

Week in Ordinary Time

BE STILL

Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord today.

THIS WEEK

- Thursday 31 August: St Ignatius of Loyola (Memorial)
- Wednesday 1 August: St Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop, doctor (Memorial)
- Friday 3 August: St Dominic, Priest (Memorial)

Gathering Prayer

Loving God,
As we enter this time of prayer
Open our hearts to hear your word
In order that we may deeply respond to your presence
in our lives. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (6:1-15):

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Ponder

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) noted that in the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to practice *Lectio Divina* – the reading of God's word in prayer asking that it 'enlighten and renew' us. The following questions may help with this:

- Lord, what does this text mean to me?
- What is it about my life that you want me to change by this text?
- What troubles me about this text?
- Why am I not interested in this?
- What do I find pleasant about this text?
- What is it about this word that moves me?
- What attracts me?
- Why does it attract me?

Reflect

"Each saint is a living Gospel. They have all in some way, embodied—literally incarnated—the challenge of faith in their time and place, and so opened a path that others might follow."
(Robert Ellsberg: <https://blog.franciscanmedia.org/sam/meet-the-franciscan-saints>)

This week of Ordinary Time is rich with the celebration of saints. St Ignatius of Loyola, St Alphonsus Liguori, and St Dominic all took into their hearts the challenges of their time and had a capacity to respond to Jesus in their lives. They each fashioned a particular spirituality in response to their experience of God—a spirituality that has endured through the ages. From the heart of their spirits sprang their action as they lived Gospel lives.

Perhaps this week is a week for us to reflect on how it is that we can live the Gospel in our time and place.

PRAY

Loving God
Open my eyes so that I may see the blessings of my life
Open my ears that I may hear your word in my life
Open my hands that in my work and through my life I may embody the Gospel.
Amen.

IMAGE: *Jesus multiplies loaves and fish* by Jesus Mafa