



# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

October 6, 2024

## A Suitable Partner

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

In the story of the creation of the first woman, the Hebrew word *ezer* is used to describe her relationship with the first man. Many Bibles translate that word as “helper” or “helpmate,” thus making the woman an addition to the man. The lectionary translates the word as “suitable partner,” emphasizing mutuality rather than subservience. Since the word is generally used for divine assistance, it certainly does not imply inferiority.

Another important Hebrew word is *bad*, usually translated as “alone.” A common meaning is “separated from,” implying incompleteness in a

relationship. This incompleteness is remedied when the man is given a suitable partner, one who is as intimate a companion to him as are his bones.

The intimacy of this relationship of mutuality is found in the Gospel passage as well. There the focus is on the endurance of the relationship. Jesus insists that the bond that joins the couple together must not be severed. Many today might find this ruling too rigid. Things can happen in intimate relationships; partners can grow apart; staying together could become dangerous. While these are valid concerns today, women in the patriarchal society of the time would see Jesus’ interpretation of the law as protecting them. By law only men could divorce their wives, and reasons for doing so could be as trivial as poor cooking.

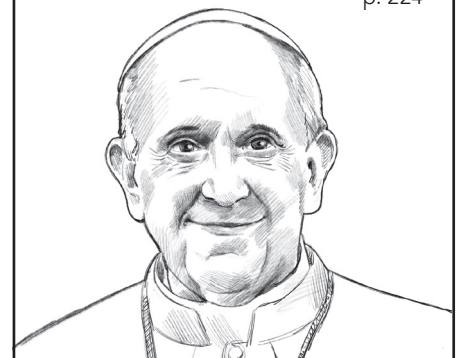
Today’s readings remind us of our need for intimate relationships of mutuality. They further underscore how important it is to cherish such relationships and to nurture them by respecting our partners. †

***His incompleteness is remedied when the man is given a suitable partner, one who is as intimate a companion to him as are his bones.***

## A Word from Pope Francis

Love needs time and space; everything else is secondary. Time is needed to talk things over, to embrace leisurely, to share plans, to listen to one other and gaze in each other’s eyes, to appreciate one another and to build a stronger relationship. Sometimes the frenetic pace of our society and the pressures of the workplace create problems.

On Love in the Family (*Amoris Laetitia*),  
p. 224



## Sunday Readings

### Genesis 2:18–24

The LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.”

### Hebrews 2:9–11

He who “for a little while” was made “lower than the angels,” that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

### Mark 10:2–16 or 10:2–12

[Jesus said,] “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.... So they are no longer two but one flesh.”

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Are you a nurturing person?
- Are you as kind in private as you are in public?

# What Do You Want Me to Do for You?

Paige Byrne Shortal

The Gospel passages we hear these October Sundays are challenging. On the first Sunday, the issue is adultery and divorce. I serve in my archdiocese as an advocate – someone who helps people through the annulment process. At a talk after mass, I said, “I’m going to ask five questions. When I’m finished, I’m going to invite you to stand—only if you’re comfortable—if you can answer yes to one or more of these questions: Are your parents divorced? Are any of your children divorced? Are any of your siblings divorced? Are any of your friends divorced? Are you divorced?” Well, you can guess what happened. Everyone stood—the congregation, choir members, servers, deacon, presider, everyone. After they all stood, I asked quietly, “Why do divorced Catholics feel so alone?”



The second Sunday’s Gospel is about the rich young man who went away sad because he couldn’t detach from his many earthly possessions even though what he really wanted was eternal life. On the third Sunday, James and John try to finagle a higher place in heaven. Jesus

responds with a teaching on the nature of Christian leadership. And on the fourth Sunday, we hear blind Bartimaeus beg by the side of the road. When he hears Jesus is coming, he cries for mercy. Jesus stops and invites Bartimaeus to come to him. A small detail is included: Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, unlike the rich young man, forsaking his only possession. Jesus asks Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” It’s the same question Jesus asks of James and John. What do you want me to do for you?

Jesus respects our free will. He always asks permission before he heals, because not everyone wants to be well. Not everyone wants to see. Not everyone is willing to give up riches, importance, power—or even the familiar—to follow Jesus. Until maybe we see Jesus’ kind, knowing face and hear him ask us, “What do you want me to do for you?” †

## Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “An Examen for Married Couples” by Fr. Michael Champagne, CJC

The Church teaches that marriage and the family constitute the original cell of society and likewise that of the Church. If the cells of a body are healthy, the body tends to be healthy. Holy, healthy marriages tend to produce holy, healthy families, which in turn give rise to a healthy society and contribute to a holy, healthy Church. Indeed, the Christian family is a school of love, teaching kindness, generosity, patience, gratitude, sacrifice, and forgiveness, all for the glory of God and in the service of God’s people. †

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*Faithful God, help us to be faithful in our relationships, and fulfill our promise to seek the wellbeing of others, to love as we wish to be loved.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 7–12

**Monday**, Our Lady of the Rosary:  
Gal 1:6–12 / Lk 10:25–37


**Tuesday**, Weekday: Gal 1:13–24 /  
Lk 10:38–42

**Wednesday**, Weekday: Gal 2:1–2, 7–14 /  
Lk 11:1–4

**Thursday**, Weekday: Gal 3:1–5 /  
Lk 11:5–13

**Friday**, Weekday: Gal 3:7–14 /  
Lk 11:15–26

**Saturday**, Weekday: Gal 3:22–29 /  
Lk 11:27–28

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# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 13, 2024

## Take Your Pick

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The vast array of possibilities in today's world is both an extraordinary advantage because it can so enrich life and a bewildering encumbrance as we face weighty decisions. Many think that life in the past was less complicated. It might have seemed that way, but women and men have always had to face the same fundamental questions: What is life all about? To what shall I commit myself? And answering such questions has seldom been easy.

Today's first reading underscores the importance of discernment or wisdom as

we search for answers. It insists that such discernment or wisdom outstrips riches, or even health, as the goal toward which we should strive. It further assures us that in our striving for wisdom we will discover that she does not come to us alone. Rather, she brings all good things with her.

The Gospel passage tells of a young man in search of true meaning, of wisdom, of eternal life. Having valued the law and the way of life it offers a believer, he is dissatisfied. He wanted something more satisfying; something deeper. He is still struggling to discover what life is all about, to what he should commit himself. Jesus tells him that he will not find what he is looking for in his riches. Rather, he should commit himself to the welfare of others. Unfortunately, this advice was too much. He went away sad. Even knowing that he was dissatisfied with his wealth, he still would not walk away from it. †

## A Word from Pope Francis

A faith without giving...without works of charity, makes us sad in the end: just like that man who returned home "sorrowful" with a fallen countenance, even though he had been looked upon with love by Jesus in person. Today we can ask ourselves: "At what point is my faith?"

Angelus, Rome, October 10, 2021



## Sunday Readings

### Wisdom 7:7-11

I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.

### Hebrews 4:12-13

The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword.

### Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor..."



**Discernment or wisdom outstrips riches, or even health, as the goal toward which we should strive.**

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you cling to something that cannot fulfill your deepest desires?
- Pray for the courage to commit yourself to what will make life more meaningful.

# What Makes Us Happy?

Mario J. Paredes

It is the responsibility of the Church and of each Christian disciple to demonstrate, through what we believe and through what we practice, that Christ saves us. Or to say it another way, Christ makes us happy, he gives us abundant life, new life, full life, eternal life, for which we long. Christ leads us to measure our success as persons only against the true happiness we have obtained through faith in him.

If the way we live our daily lives does not make this message clear, then the Church's proclamation of salvation becomes one that no one understands or finds convincing. Moreover, if such a proclamation is clothed in the customs and language of past ages, the message of true happiness becomes one that is easily ignored. We must vigorously proclaim



this "good news" in each and every place we live and work.

As Christians, we believe that Christ saves us, he makes us happy. We believe that the question of the rich young man who asks Jesus what he should do to

obtain eternal life (happiness) is our eternal question as well. We also believe that Jesus' answer to the rich young man responds to our questions today. To find happiness, we must love and serve others, especially the most needy. (See Matthew 19:16-21.) Therefore life in Christ, as God's children and as brothers and sisters, is necessary for every person who seeks happiness. In the resurrection of Christ we confess the triumph of good, justice, mercy, and life beyond death. Through Christ, we know that God wants us to have life—and not just any kind of life, but life that is abundantly happy and truly successful, life that springs from the new commandment of love and calls us to serve one another just as God himself has loved and served us. (See John 10:10; 13:34.) †

## Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From "Blessed John Paul I: A Smile on the Face of Christianity" by Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR

Is there a secret formula for happiness? According to Earnie Larsen, "The two deepest desires most people have are to love and be loved and to believe they are worthwhile and know someone else believes that also. In other words, to be happy we need someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to." Solid marriages, strong relationships with family and friends, social interaction, self-esteem, a fulfilling purpose and activity in life, faith and spirituality to provide hope and meaning, predict happiness because they include "someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to." †

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*God of wisdom, give us the grace to make wise choices, to discern your call to lead the life that will fill us with true joy.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 14–19

**Monday**, Weekday: Gal 4:22–24, 26–27, 31–5:1 / Lk 11:29–32


**Tuesday**, St. Teresa of Jesus: Gal 5:1–6 / Lk 11:37–41

**Wednesday**, Weekday: Gal 5:18–25 / Lk 11:42–46

**Thursday**, St. Ignatius of Antioch: Eph 1:1–10 / Lk 11:47–54

**Friday**, St. Luke: 2 Tm 4:10–17b / Lk 10:1–9

**Saturday**, Sts. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, and Companions: Eph 1:15–23 / Lk 12:8–12

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# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 20, 2024

## Can You Drink the Cup?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

That is the question in today’s Gospel that Jesus posed after James and John, two of his closest followers, asked for places of honor. They wanted to be recognized for their loyalty. Don’t we all? Jesus asks them: “Can you drink the cup?” (Mark 10:38). Can you pay the price? And they both say: “We can” (10:39). Such confidence and self-assurance!

This is a Sunday that focuses on hardship—not the hardship that comes from the burdens of life itself, such as economic distress, racial and gender bias, or the loss of loved ones. Jesus was certainly concerned about these. However,

today’s readings have a specific focus. He asks: “Can you drink the cup that I drink?” Can you face and endure what I must? Can you follow me to suffering?

Isaiah refers to the servant of the Lord, that mysterious individual who suffers at the hands of others precisely because of his loyalty. However, his suffering is not in vain: “Because of his anguish... my servant, the just one, shall justify the many...” (53:11). The spirit of this servant lives on in many stories about Jesus. It certainly does this Sunday. Like the servant, Jesus will suffer for the sake of others. How ready are James and John, you and I, for such a role? Jesus then turns the values of society upside down. You want to be great? Then you have to serve others. You want to be first? Then, for the sake of others, you have to put yourself last. To follow Jesus means to follow him even through suffering. “Can you drink the cup?” †

## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 53:10–11

My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, / their iniquity he shall bear.

### Hebrews 4:14–16

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way....

### Mark 10:35–45 or 10:42–45

[Jesus said,] “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



**Like the servant,  
Jesus will suffer for the  
sake of others. How ready  
are James and John,  
you and I, for such a role?**

## A Word from Pope Francis

How many times, we Christians, who should be servants, try to climb up, to get ahead. We should thus always evaluate our heart’s real intentions, asking ourselves: “Why am I carrying out this work, this responsibility? To offer service or rather to be recognized, [to be] praised, and to receive compliments?”

Angelus, Rome, October 17, 2021



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- What makes you feel unappreciated?
- How can you ask Jesus to help you turn that feeling into prayer?

# Everyday Morality

Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

In high school we had to take a class called “Social Problems.” The teacher would present a dilemma, usually some kind of dramatic life-and-death situation, and we had to think our way toward an ethical, socially-responsible resolution. The idea was to teach moral values and moral behavior. A weakness in the course was that we were left with the idea that moral reasoning was required in great and exceptional moments but not necessarily in the ordinary decisions of daily living. Simple activities like eating and shopping also have implications for moral or ethical living.

A walk through your favorite supermarket or clothing outlet can be revealing. Some clothes are tagged “sweat-free,” meaning that the item’s production complies with fair and ethical labor practices. No one was exploited in making them.



Other clothes are tagged to advertise a cause. For example, if you buy a certain T-shirt, a percentage of what you pay goes to support a particular foundation.

Shopping with a conscience, buying for a cause, and eating ethically are becoming more popular. More and

more we are concerned about where the things we buy come from, how they’re made, who made them, and the effect our purchase and its use will have on our planet.

The Church has a long tradition of the examination of conscience. One examines past actions with an eye to the future. What is done well should be celebrated and repeated, and what is sinful should be lamented and avoided. This kind of reflection helps to form our conscience.

There is an “examination of conscience” for diners and shoppers. Read labels, tags, and the fine print. Each can reveal a host of social problems and at the same time invite us to reflect on our participation in them. Who picked your tomatoes? Who imported your denim? Conscience is not only personal, but also social. And it’s in the marketplace. Shop and eat your way to a better world and a better you. †

## Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “Voting with a Catholic Heart” by Stephen P. White

Our responsibility as citizens is fulfilled when we act in defense of the human person and for the sake of the common good. Our responsibility as citizens finds expression in treating each member and part of society with justice—given to each what is due to them. Our responsibility as citizens is fulfilled when these actions are animated by a love that is ordered toward the true common good. If we take this mission seriously, if we live this mission faithfully, if we listen to our shepherds attentively, then we will have what it takes to vote with a Catholic heart. †

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*God of all people, give us the grace to remember the needs of others as we live our daily lives, as we drive, work, buy, cook, eat, and rest.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 21–26

**Monday**, Weekday: Eph 2:1–10 / Lk 12:13–21


**Tuesday**, Weekday: Eph 2:12–22 / Lk 12:35–38

**Wednesday**, Weekday: Eph 3:2–12 / Lk 12:39–48

**Thursday**, Weekday: Eph 3:14–21 / Lk 12:49–53

**Friday**, Weekday: Eph 4:1–6 / Lk 12:54–59

**Saturday**, Weekday: Eph 4:7–16 / Lk 13:1–9

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# Bringing Home the Word

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
October 27, 2024

## Shout with Joy

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

After the previous Sunday’s focus on suffering, today’s readings depict excitement. Refugees are coming home. They had been locked away and now they are free. These were vulnerable people that others did not value. Now they are going home. They have been gathered in God’s embrace. Who wouldn’t rejoice?

The Gospel tells of Bartimaeus who is blind and begging. However, his blindness did not prevent him from seeing. He seems to have known who Jesus was and that Jesus could help him. And so, he cries out, “Have pity

on me” (Mark 10:47). This man was begging outside of the city. Because of his blindness, he was shunned and rendered unemployable. All that was left for him was to beg—and beg he did. Not for money, but for sight. Jesus very clearly tells him that his faith saved him. Only then was the man healed. He had believed that Jesus has the power of new life. Like the people in the first reading, he was given a chance for a new life. No longer was he an outcast; he could now join the community. No longer was he confined to begging. He could now flourish in life.

These are not merely awe-inspiring stories. As disciples we have been called to continue Jesus’ ministry in our lives—to embrace those who are lost and help them find the warmth and security of home. We are called to help those struggling with life’s hardships to see the compassion of Jesus. †

## Sunday Readings

### Jeremiah 31:7–9

Thus says the Lord, “I will gather them from the ends of the earth, the blind and the lame in their midst...”

### Hebrews 5:1–6

It was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest, but rather the one who said to him: “You are my son; this day I have begotten you...”

### Mark 10:46–52

[Bartimaeus] threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus... “Master, I want to see.”



**The blindness of Bartimaeus did not prevent him from seeing; he knew who Jesus was.**

## A Word from Pope Francis

[Jesus] sends us forth to say to each person: “God is asking you to let yourself be loved by him.” How often, instead of this liberating message of salvation, have we brought ourselves, our own “recipes” and “labels” into the Church! ... How often do people feel the weight of our institutions more than the friendly presence of Jesus!

Homily, Rome, October 28, 2018



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do you know what it is to finally see clearly when before you were blind?
- Ask God to show you what you cannot see now.

# The Virtues of Fitness

Kevin Vost

Virtues are essentially good habits that enable us to make the most of ourselves, to do the right thing, to help others, and to enjoy the process. Four essential virtues can serve as foundational “virtues of fitness.”

**Fortitude** is the perfection of our passions that gives us the courage to endure hardships to achieve good. Fortitude enables us to endure the physical discomforts that can accompany the intense rigors of strength training and the less intense but longer-lasting travails that accompany aerobic or cardiovascular workouts. The good it achieves is bodily strength, energy, and endurance.

**Temperance** helps us keep our desires in check when they would lead us into excess and sin. In the realm of health and fitness, temperance most directly relates to diet and nutrition. Temperance will allow us to combat gluttony and find joy



in eating healthy proportions of our daily bread (and yes, our chocolate and pasta). Temperance is not about special food supplements or crash diets. It’s about developing sensible habits that we can practice throughout a lifetime.

**Prudence** is that practical wisdom that determines reasonable and ethical means

to attain ethical ends. In the context of fitness, prudence develops when we learn, through reading and personal experience, how to craft sensible, healthy routines for our lives, including strength training, endurance training, our daily work and chores, and a reasonable diet.

**Justice** involves giving all people their rightful due. In the realm of fitness, we can see that justice also considers the special goals and needs of individuals within special groups. Teenage boys seeking biceps need to be aware of the potential pitfalls that await them, from steroids to harmful supplements to regimens of overeating and overtraining that can bring them physical and spiritual harm. Teenage girls need to know that how they feel and how they function are far more important than how they look. Seniors need to find safe and healthy ways to build and retain healthy muscle tissue, sturdy bones, and sufficient energy for their golden years.

Regardless of our age or physical condition, we can all treat our bodies as temples for God’s glory and dynamos for charity. †

## Wisdom from Catholic UPDATE

From “Blessed Carlo Acutis: Saint in Sneakers” by Matt and Colleen Swaim

In his preteen and teen years, Carlo strove to maintain a proper balance of friends, family and school commitments, care for others, and a relationship with God. This key stage of moral and spiritual development is crucial in forming the kind of person one is going to be. Carlo’s care for others and his heart for service continued to shine as he approached high school. Carlo surely asked himself a question each of us must pose to ourselves: “Will I live only for myself, or will I live for others?” †

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*God of light and love, give us the courage to see what we would prefer to avoid, to face what we fear in the light of your love.*

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 28—  
November 2

**Monday**, Sts. Simon and Jude:  
Eph 2:19–22 / Lk 6:12–16


**Tuesday**, Weekday: Eph 5:21–33 /  
Lk 13:18–21

**Wednesday**, Weekday: Eph 6:1–9 /  
Lk 13:22–30

**Thursday**, Weekday: Eph 6:10–20 / Lk 13:31–35

**Friday**, All Saints: Rv 7:2–4, 9–14 / 1 Jn 3:1–3 /  
Mt 5:1–12a

**Saturday**, All the Faithful Departed  
(All Souls’ Day): Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 6:3–9 /  
Jn 6:37–40

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