

“Lord, save me!”

A reflection on today's Gospel, Matthew 14:22-33

Sunday's Gospel from Matthew is about the moments right after Jesus fed thousands of men, women, and children with five loaves and two fish.

Jesus sent the apostles to the boat and dismissed the crowds on His own. When they had left, He went up on a mountain so he could be alone and pray. He'd join them later.

Meanwhile, winds and waves took the boat far from shore.

Jesus came down to the shore in the morning. To get to them, Jesus walked on the sea.

They were shocked and clueless, when they saw Him, thinking it must be “a ghost!”

We know it was Jesus.

Yet, we too, allow ourselves to be overcome with the same ignorance and doubt.

Jesus said, “It is I; do not be afraid.”

Peter speaks for the rest with a challenge “if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

Like Peter, don't we often dare to command Christ to prove Himself to us?

Jesus, did as Peter requested. He called Peter to walk on the water to Him.

Peter did. One step and then another, Peter walked toward the

Lord, but he was taken over by fear when a strong wind came.

He lost his focus on Christ.

Peter couldn't keep his mind on Him and instead concentrated on the worst. He went under, crying desperately to God, “Lord, save me!”

Jesus reached and saved Peter. Then looked at him, questioning, “Why did you doubt?”

The winds calmed the two were among the others in the boat when they said, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”

Faith over fear is easy to say.

It's downright hard to do. God knows. But we must keep trying.

How can we get in better shape to choose faith?

Spend time in silent prayer. Read Scripture. Say the Rosary. Believe in the true presence of God in the Eucharist without any doubt or hesitation. Go to Adoration, the Sacrament of Confession, go to Mass....

We know this. Choose it.

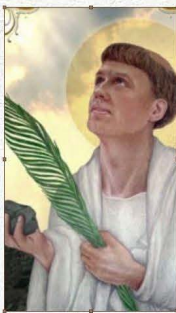
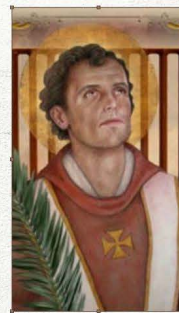
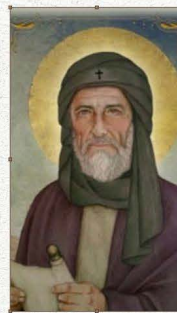
Don't drown in fear.

Let your faith help you rise above.

Keep calling out to God. He is there!

His mercy endures forever.

A Deacon for All Seasons



Editor's note: the following reflection was written for you by Deacon Michael Kawash. The graphic features prayer cards with art by Tracy Christianson.

Every now and then, a serendipitous thought enters my mind.

On the morning of June 9, 2026, as I was praying the Office of Lauds for the Optional Memorial of St. Ephrem, for some reason I began thinking about the spacing of the feast days for the four well-known deacons on the liturgical calendar. It occurred to me that these four days each fall into one of the four solar seasons.

“Did you know there is a deacon for all seasons?” I asked my wife, Janet.

“I knew there was ‘A Man for All Seasons,’” was her reply, referring to St. Thomas More, the English martyr who stood up for the Church’s teaching on marriage.

But not just a deacon for all seasons . . . a deacon for each season.

In the waning days of Spring, the Church observes the Optional Memorial of St. Ephrem, the only deacon to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church. St. Ephrem lived in the fourth century and was a prolific poet and theologian. He wrote numerous hymns to teach doctrine and combat heresy.

Once Summer is going strong, deacons have the Feast of the great St. Lawrence on August 10. St. Lawrence was a Roman deacon, one of the highly esteemed “seven deacons of Rome” who formed the Pope’s inner circle. As archdeacon, Lawrence had access to all the Church’s material wealth in order to distribute it to the poor and needy. When Emperor Valerian’s prefect ordered him to deliver all the Church’s riches over to the Roman Empire, Lawrence asked for three days to gather it up. He used those three days to quickly distribute all the material wealth of the Church to the poor, crippled, blind and suffering of the city of Rome. He then showed up at the emperor’s doorstep with all the indigent and disabled of Rome and declared to the emperor’s prefect, “behold, the Church’s treasures.”

The emperor, not appreciating Lawrence’s double entendre humor, ordered that he be put to death by burning on a gridiron, thus making St. Lawrence the patron of chefs and also making it appropriate to have a cookout that day, a very fitting summer pastime for most families.

The early Fall season ushers in the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4, perhaps the Saint most people are surprised to learn remained a deacon and chose not to be ordained a priest.

St. Francis is well known for his love of all things in God’s creation,

both living and nonliving. Founder of one of the greatest religious orders, Francis devoted his life to rebuilding God’s Church while standing in awe of God’s entire creation. Whether it was Brother Sun or Sister Moon, animals, trees or plants, Deacon Francis preached to them, reminding them that they exist because of God’s love.

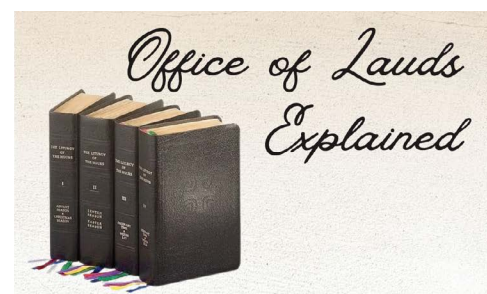
Finally, as the season of Winter begins, we celebrate the Feast of St. Stephen on December 26. Stephen is the patron of deacons and first martyr of the Church. Deacon Stephen was stoned to death following his loud and public rendition of the history of salvation from Abraham to Jesus. Deacon Stephen’s martyrdom is recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

As the first martyr of the Church, his feast day is not coincidentally the day after our Savior entered the world in the flesh. Because that day falls within the Christmas Octave, Mass on his feast day is celebrated as a Solemnity.

So, there it is—a deacon for every season of the year!

As the seasons change, the rhythm of the Church’s calendar reminds us to celebrate the witness of a deacon who answered Christ’s call with generosity and courage. From the fiery zeal of St. Stephen to the charity of St. Lawrence, from the missionary heart of St. Francis to the humble service of St. Ephrem and countless others, the Church continually puts before us examples of men whose lives were marked by service at the altar, the proclamation of the Gospel, and love for those in need.

Their feast days invite all of us—not only deacons—to embrace the vocation of servant discipleship. Whatever season we find ourselves in, may these holy deacons inspire us to serve Christ faithfully until we are all called to the feast in the one season of eternity.



The Office of Lauds, or Morning Prayer, is a “major canonical hour” in the Liturgy of the Hours rooted in Scripture. Prayed at dawn, its primary purpose is to praise God and consecrate the new day.

The title comes from *Officium Laudum* (Latin). Simply it means our “duty to praise” God through reflection, Scripture, and prayer to start our day grounded in prayer and Christ-centered mindset.

Learn more about the Liturgy of the Hours at:
ascensionpress.com/blogs/articles/what-is-the-liturgy-of-the-hours-complete-guide-to-catholic-daily-prayer

A Journey from Self to God



A pilgrimage to Rome planned by Fairmont State University Campus Minister Daniel Thele for his students was anticipated to be an amazing experience, like a major “Bucket List” item to check off. However, the experience proved only the first step to an ongoing journey closer to God – footsteps for faith formation.

Thele shared with FaithInWV a reflection he wrote about his experience, beginning with a quote from St. Augustine.

“For we are but travelers on a journey without as yet a fixed abode.”

Thele quoted these words for his students as they prepared their hearts for the trip. What St. Augustine is saying is that every human life is a pilgrimage. Although we may have homes, hometowns, and places we call our own, our deepest homeland is still ahead: eternal communion with God. Saint Augustine reminds us that we naturally live in a state of longing, specifically to encounter truth, beauty, goodness, and love.

He offered St. Augustine’s words and lessons as a reflection for the group before embarking on the life-changing pilgrimage to unfamiliar places and celebrated holy sites. Saint Augustine contrasts two ways of living: one centered on self-glory and the other on love of God.

Thele noted, while every pilgrimage has its, “joys and disappointments, unexpected delays, differing preferences, and opportunities to practice patience, generosity, and humility, (This trip

brought) sacred churches, works of art and holy places (that) become more than scenery. They help pilgrims encounter the faith of generations and recognize the communion of saints as a living reality.”

He continued, “As these students traveled together, they discovered that pilgrimage is both a physical journey and a spiritual one: a movement from self-centeredness toward shared purpose, from distraction toward attentiveness, and from longing toward the One who alone can fulfill the human heart.”

Preserved with photographs, Thele shared three profound experiences from the trip:

1. “To pray at the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi is to dwell in the earth with the husk of the seed whose white martyrdom sprouted new branches in the life of the Church as fruitful as the olive trees that surround the hilly town.”



PILGRIM PERSPECTIVES



Annie Pierson – “We started our pilgrimage in the beautiful city of Milan, and one of our first stops was the Basilica of Saint Ambrose. It was powerful

to see a rather simple architecture hold the remains of Saint Ambrose in the crypt. Our next stop was Florence, a city with beautiful depictions of Jesus’ life. It had amazing spaces where we got to sit in peace in pray. Both cities foreshadowed a theme I found myself thinking about for the rest of the pilgrimage: the realization that such sacred designs could only be completed through a certain divine guidance.”



Abby Rock – “Stepping onto foreign soil, I was immediately struck by a wave of unfamiliar sights and sounds, yet one thing united us all: our faith.

Throughout our travels, we were surrounded by people from every corner of the world. We may have dressed differently, spoken different languages, and expressed our devotions in unique ways, but there was a tangible sense of unity flowing among us, drawing us closer to the heart of our journey...

“With the recent canonization of St. Carlo Acutis, I often find my thoughts returning to the moment I stood in Santa Maria Maggiore, separated from him by only a thin pane of glass. Known as ‘the saint in blue jeans,’ St. Carlo feels strikingly close to us. A friend noted that he knew someone who owned the same shoes St. Carlo is buried in. Such a small detail should be insignificant, yet it deeply moved me. St. Carlo died just a year after I was born—I can now say I lived at the same time as a saint. As a young person, it is tempting to postpone holiness for later stages of life, but St. Carlo reminds me that the time is now.”



Kate Grant – “The Basilicas in Assisi were quiet. In a world so busy full of noise to be in the silence and awe of God was startling.... In our world

silence can be considered scary because it can hold the unknown. Throughout all of Assisi the silence was welcomed, it was comfortable. Assisi in itself was a powerful example of how the silence in our lives should not be filled with fear but rather in the joy that those are moments to be spent with Him.”

2. “Being embraced by the arms of Saint Peter’s Basilica, with its litany of saints, invites one into the very bosom of the Catholic Church, encouraging you to join them.”



3. “Gazing upon Michelangelo’s Pietà, you know that as Mary holds Him who said to John, “Behold, your mother,” the Queen of Heaven, Our Mother, holds us in her sorrowful heart when we suffer.”



“In these and countless other examples, our pilgrimage afforded us the opportunity to take in the story of God’s saving work in history and see ourselves as participants in it,” He wrote, adding that it was a blessing it was for him and his students to “spend in a week in places that say, ‘You are human, and that is a good and joyous thing,’ or ‘You are beloved son or daughter of a loving God whose glorious kingdom it is His will that you inherit for eternity.’ Such an experience can lead to a bit of sadness upon returning home, but then Augustine (and hopefully our experience of pilgrimage) calls on us to remember, ‘... let us continue on our way, and continue without sloth or respite, so that we may ultimately arrive at our destination.’ That Kingdom that was spoken of in the grand arches and domes of cathedrals and basilicas remains to be built here in West Virginia, and the living care and joy I see in our students is more beautiful than the mere signs painted and carved, even by the most talented hands. Thankfully, the Church’s bounty of beauty extends to our own parishes and can even extend into the domestic church of our own homes.”



Natalie Wagner –
“Visiting Orvieto was a spiritual experience that invited me into a space shaped by faith, reverence, and centuries of devotion. Standing before the Duomo, I was reminded of the central role the

Church has played in guiding communities through worship, beauty, and truth, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist, which holds special significance in Orvieto’s history.... It encouraged me to slow down, be more mindful, and value experiences that connect me to history, place, and people. The town may be small, but the impact it had on my perspective was lasting.”



Kamden Lankford:

“Upon walking into (Saint Peter’s Basilica) I was taken back by the amount of detail and size of the basilica. As I entered, I was immediately moved. I felt a presence like I had never felt before, a great feeling of peace.”



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With Mary, We Look Toward Heaven

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is August 15, honoring the moment when she was taken up body and soul to heaven, sharing in her son’s victory over death and resurrection.



The bible does not give us an exact account of this glorious moment. We can only imagine that perhaps at her last breath on earth she was taken into the arms of angels as the heavens opened and the most luminous light came down to kiss the earth, welcoming Mary to her eternal home in paradise with her son our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We can marvel at the joys and sorrows of her entire life – the Immaculate Conception, the presentation of Mary by Saints Anne and Joachim in the temple, her fiat-YES to God, faithful from the moment of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, escape to Egypt, life in Nazareth, the foot of the Cross, Pentecost, her first holy communion.

In honor of the solemnity reflect how to

be a good example for others, inspiring their spiritual growth and strong virtues like our Blessed Mother.

Let us be confident in our prayers just as Mary was when she called upon her Son at the Wedding Feast at Cana.

NOTE: Because the Solemnity falls on a Saturday this year the obligation to attend the a Friday vigil or day Mass has been lifted by the USCCB. However, in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Bishop Evelio Menjivar has encouraged parishes to provide at least one Mass to celebrate the Assumption of our Blessed Mother.

Saints Who Lived the Gospel



AUGUST 10 – ST. LAWRENCE OF ROME

– This deacon's sense of humor was... well... a bit sarcastic to say the least. He certainly didn't take himself too seriously instead he humbled himself to serve all those in need especially widows and orphans. He was martyred in the year 258 by being roasted to death at the age of 33.

Legend has it that he shouted out to his Roman torturers who set fire, "I am already roasted on one side and if though

wouldst have me well cooked, it's time to turn me on the other."

Perseid meteor showers that occur around his feast day each year are known as "The Tears of St. Lawrence." During this time the night sky is illuminated with bright lights and what appears to be shooting stars.

He is the patron of deacons, chefs, firefighters, and comedians.



St Clare of Assisi



ST. SUSANNA



St. Philomena

AUGUST 11 – SS. CLARE OF ASSISI, SUSANNA, AND PHILOMENA – all share a feast day and all were stunningly beautiful, and refused to marry, desiring a life of prayer and service to God.

Saint Clare of Assisi seemed to have it all – loving parents, wealth, and beauty. However, she was not happy. Her heart ached for the many poor in her town. As a teenager, in 1211, she heard St. Francis of Assisi preach about Jesus caring for the poor. After meeting St. Francis, she chose to be a bride of the Church, commit to unceasing prayer, and care for the poor and sick. Clare's long hair was cut off by St. Francis. Her gorgeous dresses and jewels were replaced with a humble grey robe and wooden sandals.

Her father, upset at her actions, tried

to have her forcibly removed from the monastery to no avail. She and her sister Agnes founded a convent at the church of San Damiano in Assisi with the help of St. Francis. After her father died, St. Clare's own mother joined their community. They would later be known as the Poor Clares.

Saint Susanna died a martyr in the third century, after refusing to marry the son of a pagan emperor. Her love of Christ's example of how we should live our life to serve others and to teach the truth about God converted many of her relatives and acquaintances to Christianity. This infuriated the royal who was humiliated by young Susanna. It is believed she and her father, who refused to force his daughter into marriage, were beheaded

in their own home. Today St. Susanna ad duas domos in Rome, a basilica named in honor of St. Susanna, sits on the grounds of where historians believe the house once stood.

St. Philomena was Greek princess, who at the age of 13 took a vow of virginity. That same year, 304 AD. After refusing to marry Emperor Diocletian of Rome, he had her thrown in jail and tortured ultimately leading to her death – a martyr for their faith.

Legend tells us that when she was in prison, St. Philomena had a vision of the Virgin Mary, who revealed her fate to her. Mary promised heavenly glory and protection when she endured tortures. Stories handed down from generation to generation tell us that the young girl was brutally beaten and left untreated in her cell to die, but angels healed her wounds with a heavenly balm. Then Emperor ordered an anchor be tied to her neck and her thrown in the water to drown. That attempt was also unsuccessful when angels placed her back on land, alive and breathing. Archers were sent to kill her, but like a boomerang, the arrows soared by to the men, killing them instead. The emperor then had her decapitated. She died in Rome, on August 10, 304 AD.



AUGUST 12 – ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL – “Though we should fall fifty times a day, let us rise again quite

simply, without wasting thought in self-reflections on what we may have done or left undone. Such useless discouragements are often greater faults than the ones that so disturb us.”

In a book of her writings – Selected Letters of Saint Jane Frances de Chantal -

she writes honestly her feelings of abandonment, confusion, joy, sorrow, and many other common feelings we all have, but fail to relate to a saint’s life.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal, born in 1572. Her mother died when she was a toddler, so, she was raised by her father, M. Benigne Fremoit – President of the Senate of Dijon. Jane was smart and kind. She cared for her father and others as if she was serving God. She adored the

Blessed Virgin Mary and found strength in her and her grace.

Happily married at 21, she had four children. However, seven years into her marriage her husband was killed in a hunting accident. Jane questioned if she ever would be happy again. She was confused about what God really wanted from her life. She concentrated on listening to her heart and not her anxious mind. She prayed for spiritual guidance.

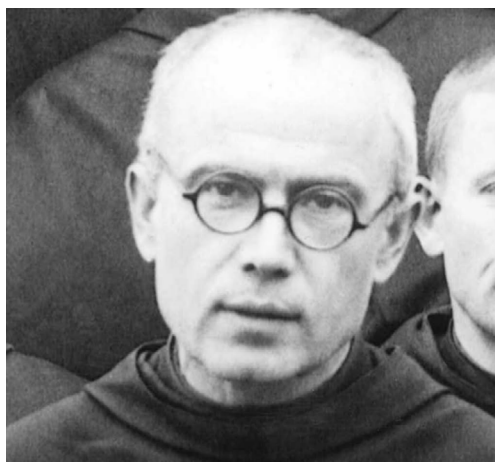
After hearing St. Francis de Sales speak, she found the beginnings of peace. He became her spiritual director. When her children were grown, she became a nun and later the Mother Superior for the Order of the Visitation, which she founded with St. Francis de Sales.



AUGUST 13 – SS. PONTIAN AND HIPPOLYTUS – Thursday is a shared feast

day for a pope and priest who reconciled their differences just before becoming martyrs around 325 AD. The two conflicted over the Church being too strict versus the Church being too forgiving. However, their argument became mute when they like other Christians of the time were imprisoned and forced into

labor at the same mine. Forced to work side by side they realized how petty their disputes were and their stubbornness was more about being right than about what God wanted. Both remained faithful to God and shared their love of Christ until their last breath.



AUGUST 14 – ST. MAXIMILLIAN KOLBE – “Be a Catholic; when you kneel before an

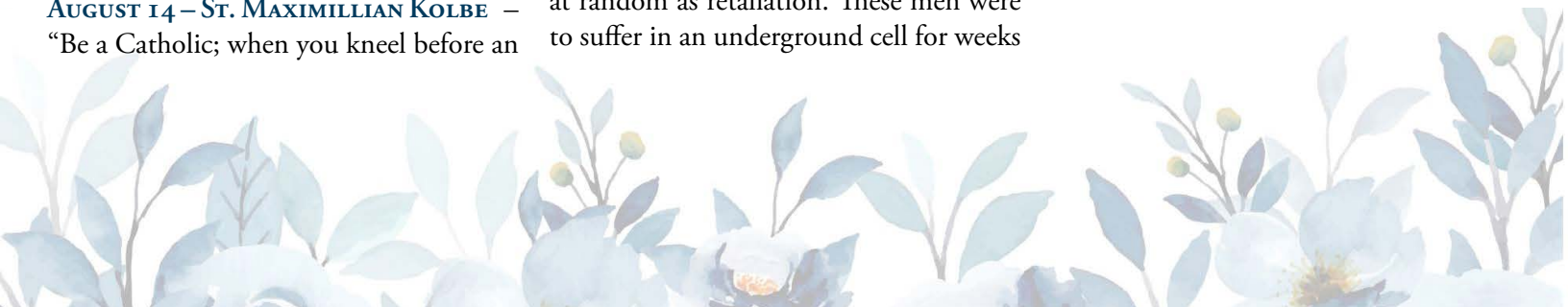
altar, do it in such a way that others may be able to recognize that you know before Whom you kneel.” – St. Maximilian Kolbe. Heed his words, knowing without hesitation that, “God dwells in our midst, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.”

It was 1941, St. Maximilian was a prisoner in the Auschwitz death camp. He was sent there after being arrested for helping Polish refugees, including about 2,000 Jews.

When a prisoner had escaped the camp, the Nazis picked 10 of the already frail men at random as retaliation. These men were to suffer in an underground cell for weeks

of painful dehydration and starvation. Saint Maximilian volunteered to take the place of one of the 10 who immediately cried out for his wife and children. The soldiers accepted the offer and threw him in with the other men. It was reported he preached to them as the long days and nights passed. After two weeks, nine men had died, but St. Maximilian still alive. He was put to death by lethal injection.

The man he saved was, Franciszek Gajowniczek. He attended St. Maximilian’s canonization in 1982.



SEARCHERS & SEEKERS

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NINETEENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

Elijah recognized God in the tiny whispering sound – the quiet moment after the storm.

Responsorial: Psalm 85

“Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.”

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

Paul speaks the truth in Christ. See through the eyes of faith, choose to be closer to God and turn away from the regrets of the past.

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on the sea. Do not let fear sink your faith.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL SCRIPTURE TEXT](#)

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that by stretching out our hands to assist those who are struggling to recover from the storms in West Virginia, we may strengthen both their faith and ours in a merciful and compassionate God, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we support our government leaders who work toward building a world where using nuclear weapons is unimaginable and that the peace the Lord proclaims may be achieved without fearful threats of mutual destruction, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us who are facing physical, mental, emotional, and financial challenges, that we never lose our focus on Christ, nor our voice to call out to Him with confidence, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of our habitual and special intentions, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer



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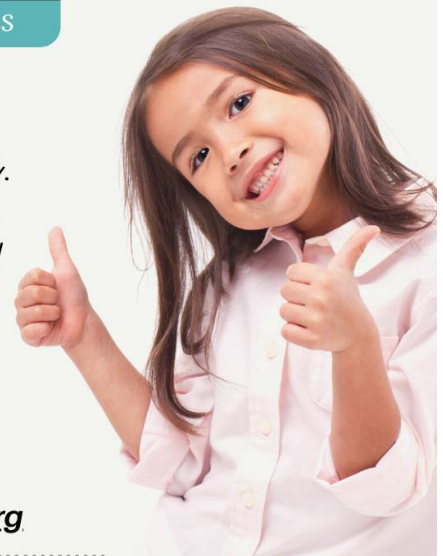
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Liturgy of the Hours

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

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MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.