

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Jeremiah 38:4–6, 8–10 • Hebrews 12:1–4 • Luke 12:49–53



Runners of All Speeds, Race On!

This week's readings invite us to view life as a race—a journey from birth to our final breath, with the ultimate goal of reaching the beatific vision and seeing God face to face in heaven. Hebrews 12 encourages us to persevere in running this race, with Christ as our example. Just as Jesus endured hostility and the Cross for the joy set before him, we are called to keep running, even through trials and challenges.

Three key insights from Hebrews help guide us in this race. First, we are not alone—we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, including saints who have completed the race and now cheer us on! These saints remind us that perseverance is not only

possible but worth it. We are also supported by the Body of Christ in our parishes, encouraging us as we run toward our heavenly goal.

Second, we must address the burdens of sin. Just as carrying unnecessary weight hinders a runner, sin can drag us down spiritually. Confession

offers us a way to cast off these burdens, whether venial sins that weaken our relationship with Christ or mortal sins that separate us from him.

Third, we are called to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. In this race, looking toward Jesus helps us navigate life's twists and turns. Whereas looking ahead determines our course, focusing on Christ shapes our decisions, actions, and words.

Whether we are running at full stride or feel like we're stuck in life's pit, this week's readings challenge us to persevere. Let us run with endurance, knowing that we are not alone. Let us cast off sin and keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us toward the joy of eternal life.



Live the Gospel

Jeff Cavins says, "I ride a motorcycle. As I ride, I lean into what I'm looking at. Think about leaning into your faith this week and decide to participate in a sacrament that will help you get rid of the weights of sin that hold your faith back. That sacrament is Confession. To 'persevere in running the race that lies before us,' as Hebrews 12:1–2 tells us to do, we have to look to Jesus. Keep racing!"

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to

<https://media.ascensionpress.com/video/twentieth-sunday-in-ordinary-time-c/>

Ponder and Pray

» Are there burdens or sins in your life that slow you down in your spiritual race? Can you cast them off and seek renewal through Confession this week?

» Who inspires you to persevere? A saint? How will you seek their intercession and support on your journey?

» We're on a race toward heaven. What changes can you make this week to keep moving forward—whether in your prayer life, relationships, or personal goals?

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today's Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins' reflection, your priest's homily, your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most out of today's Mass.

“ Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us.

—Hebrews 12:1

”

Week 33



PHASE 3: MEDITATING ON THE MYSTERIES

The Joyful Mysteries in Art

THE VISITATION

This week, we will meditate on a piece of sacred art depicting the Visitation (see Luke 1:39–56): Federico Maldarelli's *Visitation*, a painting from 1889 located in the Church of Saints Severino and Sossio in Naples, Italy.

After taking a moment to collect your thoughts and lift your mind to God, prayerfully gaze upon the image, noticing what catches your eye and what intrigues you. Below are points of reflection to assist in your meditation.



Painting of the Visitation by Federico Maldarelli, Church of Saints Severino and Sossio (Naples, Italy)



Sunday Q&A

Your Faith in Focus

OUR FOREVER PRAYER

Where does the Rosary come from?

Many Catholics are at least somewhat familiar with the Rosary. We get that it has something to do with the Blessed Virgin Mary, something to do with following the story arc of the Gospel, and it is prayed using beads. But where did the Rosary come from? As we draw near to the date on which we celebrate Mary's Assumption into heaven (August 15), it is appropriate that we join Fr. Mike Schmitz as he discusses the origins of the Rosary.

Saints Dominic and Simon Stock

In the 1200s, St. Dominic and St. Simon Stock were two pioneers, or champions, of the Rosary that we Catholics pray today.

To start, 150 Hail Marys were prayed throughout the day, and that number could be divided into groups of ten. Each group of ten is called a decade. The first decade would begin with the Our Father and close with the Glory Be. Each decade would reflect on a scene from Our Lord's life. This practice led us to name the main sets the joyful mysteries, the sorrowful mysteries, and the glorious mysteries.

Those Hail Marys total 150, a number equal to the number of psalms in the Bible. To help the Faithful keep track, beads or knots were introduced as a helpful tool. Christians prayed like this starting in the 300s.

St. Simon Stock, St. Dominic, and other Christians were regularly saying "I want to reflect on the Lord's life" with the mysteries. These mysteries of the Rosary helped—and still help—Catholics keep the Incarnation "alive." Then, and now, at least every couple of days—maybe even every day—the Rosary helped the Faithful to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of God humbling himself and entering our lives.

Praying the Rosary throughout the year helps us keep God the Son's life active in our lives. When you are praying the Rosary, you get to reflect on that deep, profound gift of love that Jesus gave to the world, and you honor the Triune God and our Mother Mary.

Centuries ago, the Rosary started as a powerful prayer, a tool that Christians could use against a culture that was changing dramatically. I think you can readily recognize that our precious Rosary is still mightily needed today in a world where God is often shunned.

"Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee." And lo, he is with us, too. Always.

"The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary shall not perish."

*—The Blessed Virgin Mary,
speaking to St. Dominic*

Make it Your Own

Fill in this Rosary diagram with the prayers that belong to each bead. (For help, scan the code that will lead you to pray the Rosary.)

Ponder and Pray

- What is the role of the Rosary in your life? Have you tried praying along with an app or other tool?
- What would be the best and most realistic course for you to continue to grow in your own relationship with Jesus and Mary through the Rosary?

1. Holding the rosary beads, make the Sign of the Cross.
2. Pray the Apostles' Creed (on the crucifix).
3. Pray an Our Father (first bead).
4. Pray three Hail Marys (second through fourth beads).
5. Pray the Glory Be and the (optional) Fatima Prayer (fifth bead).
6. Announce the first mystery, and then pray the Our Father.
7. Pray ten Hail Marys on the next decade (ten beads), meditating on the mystery.
8. On the next single bead, pray the Glory Be and the (optional) Fatima Prayer.
9. On the same bead, announce the next mystery and pray the Our Father.
10. Repeat steps 7 to 9 for each of the four remaining mysteries.
11. After the fifth mystery, pray the Hail, Holy Queen (on the rosary centerpiece).
12. Conclude with the Rosary Prayer, and make the Sign of the Cross.



Dive Deeper

To watch a video on this topic, scan the code

or visit the URL: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/video/where-does-the-rosary-come-from/>

Tip of the Week

Pray a Rosary. Here's how!

<https://ascensionpress.com/pages/holy-rosary>



Days 225–231

THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ

GOD'S GOODNESS CAN FOLLOW CONSEQUENCES



The Prophet Jeremiah (1511)
by Michelangelo

- Like Ezekiel, Jeremiah is also a priest. Jeremiah spends most of his life and prophetic ministry in Judah.
- Jeremiah preaches for roughly fifty years, speaking harsh words out of great love.
- “As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed” (Jeremiah 2:26). Thieves feel shame only when caught. Likewise, we are often only ashamed when we are caught sinning.
- Jeremiah also accuses the people of teaching others to sin through scandal—that is, leading others to sin by sinful examples. He reminds us that our sins bring suffering to those around us.
- Ezekiel 33 is a pivot point of the Scripture—when the destruction of Jerusalem occurs.
- Jeremiah 6, Ezekiel 34, and Proverbs 14 all focus on leadership. Proverbs 14 says the role of a king is to be the man who has been entrusted with the people of God. In Ezekiel 34, God rebukes the shepherds of Israel who have cared for themselves, not the sheep.
- In Ezekiel 37, the Lord promises a future king in the line of David, the Messiah, who will be the sole shepherd of one people and one kingdom. In his Gospel, Matthew shows how Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise.
- Today, “follow your heart” is often advised. But our hearts can lead us astray. Trust God.

Dive Deeper

A defining characteristic of a person striving for holiness is a commitment to return to God even after a fall. Today, contemplate the open arms of the Lord. Ask him to help you become skilled at learning how to come back to him.

Bible Answers

How does Jeremiah prefigure Jesus?

Jeremiah uses symbolic or prophetic actions to announce and enact his prophecy, just as Jesus does in overturning the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple. In Jeremiah 19, God directs Jeremiah to smash a jar or flask in the presence of Jerusalem's leaders to illustrate the fate awaiting Jerusalem unless the people repent of their hardened ways.

The establishment did not like Jeremiah's message. More than any other prophet, Jeremiah's biography and internal turmoil is a key part of the book. Like Jesus, he is beaten and persecuted (see Jeremiah 20:2). Jeremiah describes himself as "a gentle lamb led to the slaughter" (11:19), just as Jesus is the Paschal Lamb of God. Jeremiah perseveres, despite his agony.



SHEPHERD WATCHING HIS FLOCK

In Ezekiel 34, God is presented as the shepherd who will personally protect and guide Israel.

In this photograph, a modern-day shepherd accompanies his flock.



Scan the QR code to listen to the *Bible in a Year* podcast on the Ascension app, to get exclusive content, and to access transcripts for every episode. Download the reading plan at <https://media.ascensionpress.com/category/ascension-podcasts/bibleinayear/>

The Bible in a Year is a daily podcast, produced by Ascension and hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz, where we read the whole Bible following *The Great Adventure* Bible-study program created by Jeff Cavins. This bulletin was adapted from *The Bible in a Year Companion* books that complement the podcast.

Week 33

Paragraphs 1667-1698



THE CATECHISM IN A YEAR

WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ

How We Worship PART TWO: THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

HOW DO WE LIVE TOWARD ETERNITY?

Everything we do points toward the moment when death moves us from this life into eternity. The Christian meaning of death is revealed in how Jesus died, embracing the Cross with trust in the Father. The Cross itself is a sign of suffering, sin, and brokenness, but also of hope: Through the Cross, Jesus conquered death and opened heaven. In the Nicene Creed, we say, "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." We strive to follow in Jesus' footsteps toward heaven, choosing the moral life God calls us to. It can feel impossible, but everything is possible with God. Every time we fall but get up, it's a victory for the kingdom and a step closer to eternal life.

Keep in Mind

- Without freedom, we simply would not be human. God gave us the incredible privilege of being free to choose the good.
- Our bodies are who we are. How we live in the body determines our character, even for eternity. So, we have to treat the body with respect.
- We hear the Gospel proclaimed, are brought into communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the sacraments, and are called to live a new life as partakers of the divine nature as children of God.
- We fall, but the Lord sustains us, giving us grace through the sacraments and prayer.
- Sacramentals, like holy water, sanctify daily life and prepare us for sacramental grace.
- The Sign of the Cross reminds us of being claimed for Christ at baptism.



Dive Deeper

Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, the holy parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, lived in the 1800s and became the first modern married couple to be canonized in 2015. Their marriage models the pursuit of sanctity in every vocation.

- Even if they die in a state of grace, most people still need cleansing from the effects of sin. This is why we pray for the dead and offer Masses for their souls.
- Three elements are crucial for living out sometimes very challenging moral teachings: the mercy of God the Father, the truth of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We also have a solemn obligation to form our conscience.
- To be saints, we have to acknowledge that we are sinners but also that God loves us and gives us mercy.
- Without acknowledging our sins, we presume upon God's grace and presume that we will go to heaven.
- Without the mercy of God, we would be overwhelmed.

Use the space below to reflect on this week's content.

Take It to Prayer

God our Father, thank you for teaching us more about you so we can know you and our deepest identity as your beloved sons and daughters. Help us to look upon you as our Father and be drawn into your love. We pray this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



The best place to listen along is the Ascension app. Scan the QR code to get exclusive bonus content and transcripts for every episode.

The Catechism in a Year is a daily podcast produced by Ascension and hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz. It helps us understand what it means to be Catholic by reading the entire *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and allowing those truths to shape our lives. This bulletin was adapted from the books that complement the podcast: *The Catechism in a Year Companions* by Petros Willey, Fr. Mike Schmitz, and Matthew Doering.



LET THE SAINTS MARCH TO YOU



Jeremiah 38:4–6, 8–10 • Hebrews 12:1–4 • Luke 12:49–53

Family Car Talk

In today's second reading, St. Paul tells us, "*We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.*" This great cloud of witnesses refers to the saints. Heaven is filled with saints who pray for us all the time. They are our heavenly friends, and we can ask them for help. On the way home from Mass today, talk with your family about the saints.



Ask everyone in the car: "Who is your favorite saint, and why is that person your favorite?"



What saints are most like you? (For example, St. Louis and St. Zélie Martin were parents, and St. Carlo Acutis was a boy who liked video games!) If you don't know any who are like you, do some research and find some!



How does it feel to know that people just like you made it to heaven? Do you want to be a saint?



THE SONG MAKES ME SING

Instructions: In today's Psalm (Psalm 40), King David writes: "*And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.*" Below are lyrics from the hymn "How Can I Keep from Singing"—ask your parents if you can listen to this song, and pay attention to the words.

**No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that refuge* clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?**

*A "refuge" protects us.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af8GtuhXISw>

B

BE WHO YOU ARE MEANT TO BE

Instructions: In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "*I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!*" Of course, Jesus did not mean he wanted to really set the earth on fire, but that he wanted the world to be consumed with love for God. St. Catherine of Siena once wrote, "*Be who you were meant to be and you will set the world on fire!*" Color these words from St. Catherine of Siena and ask her to pray for you to become the person God created you to be!

"BE WHO YOU
WERE MEANT
TO BE AND
YOU WILL SET
THE WORLD
ON FIRE!"

-ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA