

Sunday, Aug 23, 2026

The big question we need to answer

You might remember or have heard of the 1950s game show “The \$64,000 Question.” If contestants answered questions correctly, they won more and more money, culminating in a shot at the \$64,000 question. Two millennia earlier Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” After they had reported the theories that were floating around, he asked them the first-century version of the \$64,000 question: “Who do you say that I am?”—with the emphasis on *you*. Quick, before the clock runs out: What would be your answer?

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 22:19-23; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 16:13-20 (121).

“Simon Peter said in reply, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”

Monday, Aug 24, 2026

Labor for the Kingdom

All we know for sure about Saint Bartholomew is that he went East, probably as far as India, to spread the gospel. Armenia was his last stop, where he was flayed or crucified or maybe both. His discipleship and missionary zeal are traits worthy of remembering and passing on from generation to generation. He is the working person’s saint—patron of skilled laborers—who helped build God’s kingdom by his sweat and blood. With summer drawing to a close, it is a good time to recommit to throwing your whole self—body and soul—into God’s work of bringing Good News to the poor and his promise of justice and mercy to all.

FEAST OF BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Revelation 21:9b-14; John 1:45-51 (629). *“Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him.”*

Tuesday, Aug 25, 2026

It’s time for a serious talk

The true battles of our hearts seldom make for good conversation. The poet W. H. Auden hit squarely on this point when he wrote, “To hear people talk, you would think that in their free time they were concerned with nothing but sex, prestige, and money. But the very readiness with which we frankly discuss such matters is a sign that they are not our serious concern.” What, then, are our serious concerns? Auden might say alienation and isolation. Christ, through his radical outreach to people on the margins, seems to agree. But Jesus goes even deeper and sees that our most serious concern is that we are unloved, unlovable, or incapable of love. That is why his message of God’s unconditional love is such good news. Our fears may not make for interesting conversation, but God’s Good News is always worth discussing.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, 14-17; Matthew 23:23-26 (426).

“Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!”

Wednesday, Aug 26, 2026

Make time for yourself

Hypocrisy is the “practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one’s own behavior does not conform.” Jesus made it clear that he had no patience with such duplicity. Saint Simeon explains why we often fall into this trap: “We judge our neighbor because we make no effort to get to know ourselves.

The one who seeks to know himself, his shortcomings, sins and transgressions, has no time to see them in the neighbor.” Spend time getting to know yourself better—the good and bad. You’ll end up more accepting of yourself and others.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18; Matthew 23:27-32 (427). *“On the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.”*

Thursday, Aug 27, 2026

The Kingdom is yours for the taking

In the early days of the church, many—maybe most—Christians expected Jesus to fulfill his promise to come back soon, maybe in their lifetimes. For people today, 2,000 years out, the anticipation may have retreated to a dim expectation. We’ve grown used to thinking Christ will fully establish the Kingdom in some far-off future. But the truth is that Christ has been with us always. As Pope Francis has said, the kingdom of God is “God’s reign in your life.” God, who is love, peace, and joy, desires those gifts for us here and now. Francis encourages us to begin with scripture: “To read the Gospel is to find Jesus and to have this Christian joy, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Matthew 24:42-51 (428). *“So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”*

Friday, Aug 28, 2026

Wisdom for the ages

Once a pagan and then a member of a heretical sect, Augustine became a Christian bishop and one of the most influential Christian thinkers. His *Confessions* marks one of the great spiritual autobiographies ever written with a profound conversion story and compelling testament to the workings of God in the human heart. In *The City of God*, Augustine laid out his comprehensive view of heaven and Earth. The impact of this deeply serious, honest, intelligent, and devoted Christian cannot be overstated. If you’ve never read the *Confessions*, pick up a copy. In it, you’ll find such rich theological insights as this: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 1:17-25; Matthew 25:1-13 (429). *“The wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps.”*

Saturday, Aug 29, 2026

The price of prophecy

If you ever wonder why there are so many “yes-people” in places of power today, remember what happened to John the Baptist. He’s the one who gave us the expression, “Having your head served up on a platter,” to describe those who pay the price for speaking up. For him, that payment was literal. John wouldn’t keep his mouth shut and insisted on speaking truth to power, as prophets have always done. Saying what needs to be said instead of protecting your own skin can be a difficult choice. In the end, though, what’s really more worth saving: your short-term security or your integrity and your soul?

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Mark 6:17-29 (430/634). *“I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist.”*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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