

Sunday, Jul 05, 2026

See with the eyes of a child

"I see dead people . . . walking around like regular people," confessed the preternatural child in the thriller *The Sixth Sense*. It is not uncommon for children to be portrayed in movies and literature as possessing special powers or visionary gifts. And we know that, as the old TV show put it, "kids say the darndest things." Because kids haven't been completely conditioned to adult social conventions, they sometimes see and say things that "wise" adults miss entirely—or perhaps simply have forgotten how to see. If we make the effort to recover the childlike innocence and openness so prized by Jesus, God has much to reveal to us—things that until now have been hidden only by the limitations of our own vision.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9, 11-13; Matthew 11:25-30 (100).

"Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones."

Monday, Jul 06, 2026

Love leads to faith and hope

We toss around words like *fidelity* and *trust*. The prophet Hosea uses his promiscuous wife and his faithfulness to her to show us how to remain faithful to God. Hosea decides no matter what, he will remain loyal to his wife. He will "speak to her heart" and wed her to righteousness and justice so that she "will know the Lord." The gospel of Matthew mirrors that same faith and trust in the story of the official who asks Jesus to give him back his deceased daughter. Both Hosea and the official cannot exhibit such faith and trust without the love they have—Hosea for his wife and the official for his daughter. Without love there cannot be faith and hope. Today we pray for faith and hope and the love to make them real in our lives.

Hosea 2:16, 17c-18, 21-22; Matthew 9:18-26 (383). *"My daughter has just died. But come, lay your hand on her, and she will live."*

Tuesday, Jul 07, 2026

Praise each day keeps the devil away

What keeps us from praising God all day long? Oh, probably a lot of things. Bad moods. Rushing around. People who drive us nuts. Distractions besiege us that make praise the furthest thing from our minds. But as the simplest form of prayer, praise could be the easiest way to find more time for spiritual growth. Indeed, Saint John Paul II says, "One must arrange one's life so that everything praises God." Try offering a few silent words of praise every hour. As you drive: What wonderful trees! As you look at your children: How creative, Lord! As you cook: Food smells so good! Keep the devil off your tongue with a mouthful of praise.

Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:32-38 (384). *"And when the demon was driven out the mute man spoke."*

Wednesday, Jul 08, 2026

Power to God's people

Don't you hate it when you see young people, particularly those closest to you, doing bad things? Isn't there some way you can take charge of the situation and turn them back to good? Evidently there is. "To convert somebody, go and take them by the hand and guide them," advises Saint Thomas Aquinas. That may not always be physically possible, but we can lead by example. When we really believe in God's reign and proclaim it by the way we

live, then we experience the authority over evil that Jesus gives us. To trust in God always, to forgive wrongdoing, and to care for others is to tap into the life-changing power of God's kingdom. Don't be afraid to use the power God gave you.

Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12; Matthew 10:1-7 (385). *"Jesus ... gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness."*

Thursday, Jul 09, 2026

Bless all in this house

Have you ever blessed your home? Blessing your home brings the presence of God to it and all who live in or visit it. Such a blessing asks for God's protection of your home and reminds those who come through the door to dwell in holiness. It also helps us remember how all good things come from God. You can ask a priest to bless your home, or you can gather your household and do it yourself. A home-blessing ritual is available in the book *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, published by the U.S. bishops. May God fill your hearts and homes with peace.

Hosea 11:1-4, 8e-9; Matthew 10:7-15 (386). *"If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it."*

Friday, Jul 10, 2026

Love leaves an impression

Sonnets of love describe with passionate detail the merits of the beloved that draw such devotion: eyes, hair, lips. Who would declare a burning love in vague or abstract terms? Would such a theoretical declaration ever be convincing? In the same way, Pope Francis argued, "There is no abstract love; it does not exist. Concrete love is the one that gets its hands dirty." Our love is shaped by our actions. We step into the mix and make our intentions known. We say, "I love you" but more important, we show that we love in the way we live each day. We make our mark for the benefit of others to ensure our love is a real and tangible thing.

Hosea 14:2-10; Matthew 10:16-23 (387). *"Let him who is wise understand these things; let him who is prudent know them."*

Saturday, Jul 11, 2026

A good guide to follow

Saint Benedict's wisdom has guided people for centuries. Among the gems of his *Rule* are the first words: "Listen carefully," followed by this distillation of other key teachings: The search for security, wealth, and salvation is futile. Instead, treat each hour as a gift. See in each day reasons for joy. Reverence the tools of work like the vessels of the altar. Small, daily brush strokes create the stunning canvas. Important decisions should be made with consultation, gaining the richness of different viewpoints. Learn from relationships not to take oneself too seriously. Know the value of silence. Choose one of these guidelines to follow each day for a week. Then start again!

MEMORIAL OF BENEDICT, ABBOT

Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 10:24-33 (388). *"Even all the hairs of your head are counted."*

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



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