

Sunday, Jul 12, 2026

Gardening lessons

If the word of God is like a seed, and Christ is the sower, what is the soil? Our hearts and minds. When we talk about the word of God, we can mean many things: the gospel message, scripture, the Incarnation, the creative spirit of God that goes forth to create and inspire. If this word finds us open and receptive and willing to respond, it bears good fruit. The word calls us to hear, understand, believe, and act accordingly. One of the challenges of faith is to be the good soil. Cultivate it in your life.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 55:10-11; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23 (103).

"The seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it."

Monday, Jul 13, 2026

Peace has its dividing lines

Those who side with Christ will find themselves unexpectedly at odds with members of their own household as well as friends, neighbors, and political leaders. As Pope Leo XIV said, "Anyone who is a disciple of Christ, the Prince of Peace, is never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs." Religious principles divide as often as they unite. Be prepared for opposition in tender places, including your own heart as you bring the sword to your old selfish ways and navigate the path of true peace.

Isaiah 1:10-17; Matthew 10:34-11:1 (389). *"I have come to bring not peace but the sword."*

Tuesday, Jul 14, 2026

A small but powerful light

Blessed Kateri was a child of the often hostile social and political collision of the Old European world with the Native American New World. Kateri, part of the Mohawk tribe, wore this confrontation physically upon her face, being marred and half-blinded by the small pox carried over by Europeans. However, as Jesuit missionary Father Pierre Cholenec reported, at her deathbed the face so disfigured by the world suddenly became transfigured by Christ. She became so beautiful before death that the French priest could only conclude she had been received into heaven at that moment. Kateri experienced a kind of transfiguration. Through this experience she was claimed as a citizen not of the world old or new, but of the heavenly kingdom. Where are our ultimate allegiances?

MEMORIAL OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Isaiah 7:1-9; Matthew 11:20-24 (390). *"Will you be exalted to heaven?"*

Wednesday, Jul 15, 2026

Take a look in the mirror

The theologian and Doctor of the Church Saint Bonaventure (1221-74) is often called the second founder of the Franciscans, because he held the order together in the critical generation after Saint Francis of Assisi. Bonaventure viewed the natural world as a reflection of God, where created things act as mirrors of the Creator's beauty and wisdom: "Every creature is a divine word because it proclaims God." He believed that seeing Christ in all created things and contemplating Christ's sacrifice on the cross

would inspire gratitude, praise, and joy among Christians and eventually lead to union with Christ. Take steps toward that union by looking lovingly upon the creatures—human and otherwise—whom you encounter each day.

MEMORIAL OF BONAVENTURE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Isaiah 10:5-7, 13b-16; Matthew 11:25-27 (391). *"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth."*

Thursday, Jul 16, 2026

Faith brings many blessings

When it comes to God's blessings, Matthew's gospel highlights the spiritual blessings Christ promises: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). Luke, on the other hand, emphasizes the physical blessings Jesus brings to his people: "Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied" (Luke 6:21). Both kinds of hunger are real. In the face of injustice, seeing the scales set right brings relief, just as food satisfies physical hunger. But how do we endure the time between what should be and what is? That is where faith comes in. Trust in God's promises, and let that hope sustain you.

Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19; Matthew 11:28-30 (392). *"You will find rest for yourselves."*

Friday, Jul 17, 2026

Kindly look around

The Greek words *Kyrie eleison* are some of the most ancient—and powerful—words of the Christian liturgy: "Lord, have mercy." Typically we find these words in the penitential rite where the church asks God's mercy and forgiveness. But these words are not just for penance; they are words of life and encouragement to the weary soul. It is as if we are saying, "Look kindly upon me." This call for mercy is not just directed toward God; it is also part of the fabric of our relationships with ourselves and the world. We can look kindly upon ourselves, instead of berating ourselves for what we didn't get done. We can look kindly upon those around us filled with fear and hatred. We can look kindly upon the fragile Earth and God's good creation. Mercy is calling you everywhere you turn.

Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8; Matthew 12:1-8 (393). *"I desire mercy, not sacrifice."*

Saturday, Jul 18, 2026

See Mary's timeless witness

A fair amount of confusion exists around the subject of Marian apparitions. Do Catholics believe in them? Perhaps the best answer would be: "Some do and some don't." In rare cases the Catholic Church may judge an apparition to be worthy of belief, but that belief is never required of Catholics. According to the Marianum Pontifical Institute in Rome, of the 295 reported apparitions studied by the Holy See through the centuries, only 12 have been approved as worthy of belief. Such an apparition is believed to offer evidence of Mary's continuing presence in the life of the church. Whether we choose to believe an apparition or not, we can see that Mary offers a timeless witness of the full response to God's plan for our lives: "Thy will be done."

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Micah 2:1-5; Matthew 12:14-21 (394). *"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen."*

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



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