

**Sunday, Jul 27, 2025**

### **Celebrate our perfect parent**

In 1994 President Clinton signed a congressional resolution setting aside the fourth Sunday of July as Parents' Day for "recognizing, uplifting, and supporting the role of parents in the rearing of children." Embracing this day is easy for those of us who have or had loving parents, but for those of us who didn't experience great parenting, we may find it hard to feel uplifted. Surely, however, we can all celebrate the fact that we have a perfect divine parent who has loved us unconditionally and cared for us unceasingly since before we were born.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:12-14; Luke 11:1-13 (111). *"If you . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"*

**Monday, Jul 28, 2025**

### **How does your garden grow?**

Jesus uses the parable of the mustard seed to illustrate that when the reign of God takes root even from the smallest seed, it will grow to great size. But is that what most of us want? Do we really hope to see the establishment of God's reign—where the lowly are lifted up and the mighty are brought to their knees? Scripture scholar John Dominic Crossan points out that in Mediterranean areas the mustard bushes that sprout from tiny mustard seeds are considered weeds—a nuisance to any garden. Hmm . . . how many of us find God's ways an irritant to our best-laid plans? God's reign is messy when judged by worldly standards. Weeds are welcome.

Exodus 32:15-24, 30-34; Matthew 13:31-35 (401). *"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed . . . It becomes a large bush."*

**Tuesday, Jul 29, 2025**

### **Martha has her moment**

Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus were close friends of Jesus. Martha has come down to us as the original "Type A" personality, the busy one in Luke's gospel who has trouble sitting still when Jesus visits. But she also was a woman of great courage and faith. Even in the face of her profound grief at having lost her brother, she was unshaken in her faith that Jesus was the "resurrection and the life." When a loss of a loved one leaves us feeling devastated, Martha's witness can bring strength and hope that death does not have the last word.

MEMORIAL OF MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS

Exodus 33:7-11; 34:5b-9, 28; John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42 (402/607). *"I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."*

**Wednesday, Jul 30, 2025**

### **We are more precious than we know**

Jesus' metaphor that the kingdom of God is a "pearl of great price," so precious that a person would sell all their possessions to have it, may seem extreme. However, Jesus is not giving out financial advice. He is putting a fine point on a truth he has utter confidence in: that God and God's reign of love is all that matters.

Often, it's only when we are pushed to the brink and confronted with losing it all that we realize the "pearl" in our midst. Think about it. Jesus laid down his life for us. We are pearls of great price to him. Breathtaking, isn't it?

Exodus 34:29-35; Matthew 13:44-46 (403). *"The Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls."*

**Thursday, Jul 31, 2025**

### **Get in the spirit of giving**

The spirit of giving doesn't come naturally to all of us. Saint Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, had a prayer for that, as he did for most things: "Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God, teach me true generosity. Teach me to serve you as you deserve, to give without counting the cost, to fight heedless of wounds, to labor without seeking rest, to sacrifice myself without thought of any reward, save the knowledge that I have done your will." When the giving gets tough, the tough get on their knees and pray for wider hearts.

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

Exodus 40:16-21, 34-38; Matthew 13:47-53 (404). *"Whenever the cloud rose from the Dwelling, the children of Israel would set out on their journey."*

**Friday, Aug 01, 2025**

### **Anything not divine must go**

Skeptics abound. Those who retain their faith are tempted toward the fringes: a severe expression of religion that either lacks mercy or embraces a laxity that makes everything seem relative and even irrelevant. Does that sound like a description of our generation? Actually, it's how many described the 18th century that saw the rise of the Enlightenment but also severe economic inequalities and class divisions. In that divided age, Saint Alphonsus Liguori became the champion of a simple focus. "The heart of man will never find true peace, if it does not empty itself of all that is not God." In our own divisive age, that remains good advice.

MEMORIAL OF ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, BISHOP,  
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Leviticus 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37; Matthew 13:54-58 (405). *"On each of the seven days you shall offer an oblation to the LORD."*

**Saturday, Aug 02, 2025**

### **Fight against fear**

When word came to King Herod about Jesus and his ministry, Herod mistook him for John the Baptist come back from the dead. Perhaps Herod's error grew out of a fear that John had returned to haunt him or seek revenge of some kind for his murder at Herod's command. Fear can lead people to many kinds of misjudgments: avoiding problems, damaging relationships, not speaking out, holding back from taking steps to go forward in life. Muster the courage to fight your fear. This simple prayer to Jesus from 20th-century Trappist monk Thomas Merton may provide some strength: "I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

Leviticus 25:1, 8-17; Matthew 14:1-12 (406). *"Mighty powers are at work in him."*

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



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