

Twenty-First Sunday
in Ordinary Time

**Simon Peter
said to Jesus,**

**“You are the Christ,
the Son of the
living God.”**

Matthew 16:16

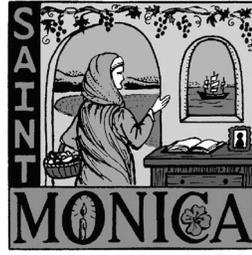
AUGUST
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Saint Monica (332-387)

August 27

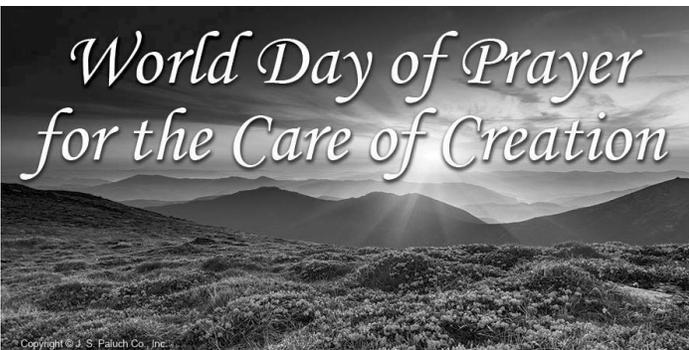
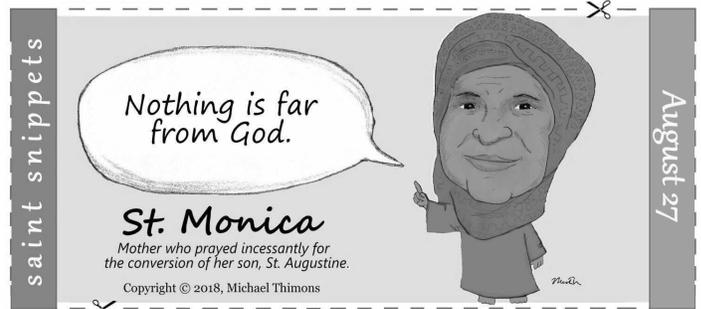
She had smiles for the neighbors, though her husband found her religion and the charity it inspired annoying. She made tearful prayers in private for a son, outwardly self-assured but, as his mother knew, inwardly restless, and whose girlfriend of a dozen years had borne his child out of wedlock. Though not the first or last such mother and son, Monica and Augustine are the Church's most famous, so we keep their feast days back to back, with Monica's, fittingly, first. To Rome she followed Augustine, then to Milan, where years of prayer—and nagging—finally bore fruit in his conversion by Saint Ambrose. For six months, mother and son enjoyed the blessing of rediscovering each other. Just in time! On the way home to North Africa, Monica took sick and died near Rome. No child who has mourned a parent can read, unmoved, Augustine's tender account, in his Confessions, of Monica's last days. At this time of the year, when parents watch apprehensively as children leave for school, may Monica's perseverance and Augustine's long-prayed-for conversion ease anxiety and kindle hope.

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



Readings for the Week

- Monday:** Rv 21:9b-14; Ps 145:10-13, 17-18; Jn 1:45-51
- Tuesday:** 2 Thes 2:1-3a, 14-17; Ps 96:10-13; Mt 23:23-26
- Wednesday:** 2 Thes 3:6-10, 16-18; Ps 128:1-2, 4-5; Mt 23:27-32
- Thursday:** 1 Cor 1:1-9; Ps 145:2-7; Mt 24:42-51
- Friday:** 1 Cor 1:17-25; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 10-11; Mt 25:1-13
- Saturday:** 1 Cor 1:26-31; Ps 33:12-13, 18-21; Mk 6:17-29
- Sunday:** Jer 20:7-9; Ps 63:2-6, 8-9; Rom 12:1-2; Mt 16:21-27



Saints and Special Observances

- Sunday:** Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
- Monday:** St. Bartholomew
- Tuesday:** St. Louis; St. Joseph Calasanz
- Thursday:** St. Monica
- Friday:** St. Augustine
- Saturday:** The Passion of St. John the Baptist

Today's Readings

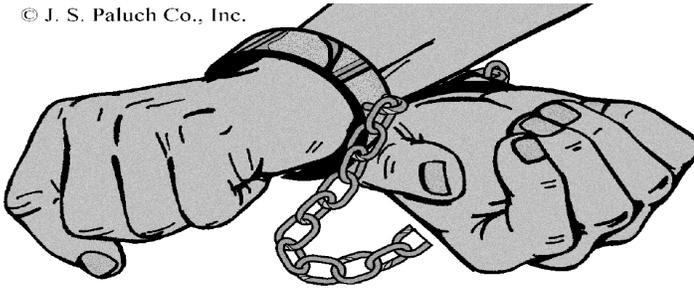
- First Reading** — Eliakim is destined by God to be a father to those who live in Jerusalem (Isaiah 22:19-23).
- Psalm** — Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands (Psalm 138).
- Second Reading** — How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33-36).
- Gospel** — Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ" (Matthew 16:13-20).

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Trust

Keys hold great significance for those who carry them. They represent the trust and authority of the owner when given to another person. We may give our house key to a trusted friend to take care of our matters while we are away. We may give keys to someone responsible for maintaining or working in a particular building. Keys to vehicles are given to people who have proven themselves responsible drivers. The readings today focus on this kind of trust—the trust that conveys authority and responsibility. In the first reading, the symbol is specifically that of a key; but the second reading and the Gospel also speak of trust and leadership as they refer to the earthly church that Jesus established.

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Twenty-first Sunday
In Ordinary Time
August 23, 2020

“Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

—Matthew 16:19

Treasures From Our Tradition

One of the most memorable images from the pontificate of Pope John Paul II is not his shocked expression as he is hit by a bullet, but rather his tender meeting with his assailant, and his forgiveness. It is far more compelling because, although people are struck by bullets every day, true reconciliation is in relatively short supply. An outside observer might list attempting to kill the pope as an unforgiveable sin, but of course we know that forgiveness of sin is woven deeply into our tradition of living as Christ did.

Interestingly enough, the Church took a hard line on these matters early on. Until the second century, people expected Christ's return in the near future, so they deferred judgment to him. Soon, however, bishops began to grant forgiveness for sin after baptism, but only once. What we know as the sacrament of penance takes its life from Jesus' work of reconciliation, but just as scripture shows Jesus forgiving people in one life-changing encounter, so the church granted one chance only. Great sins were the target, such as idolatry, adultery, and murder. Penance was lengthy, difficult, and public, and the bishop was in charge of the process. For the next several weeks, we'll look at subsequent creative and helpful changes in the celebration of this sacrament.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Jesus poses the question “But who do you say I am?” in today's Gospel passage. It is a question posed to Peter and the disciples, to Matthew's first readers, and to the Church today. Peter's confession of faith in Jesus as Christ and Son of God was a culmination of what the disciples had experienced in their life with Jesus thus far. Jesus affirms Peter's declaration as a gift from God. But it was only the beginning of Peter's understanding of what these words actually meant, and how the disciples saw themselves in light of this truth. As Jesus and the disciples turned toward Jerusalem and to the cross, the disciples perhaps pondered their own identity, together with their dawning understanding of Jesus' identity. For us, the journey of faith, initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit, means an ongoing reflection upon who Jesus is and who we are.

To Bind And To Loose

When Jesus says to Peter “whatever you bind” or “whatever you loose” in today's Gospel, he describes a distinct power that emerges from Peter's faith in Jesus. The capacity to bind or to loose suggests a new ability, both to restrain or block forces that harm the community of faith, and also to release or liberate energies that strengthen the community.

It might be helpful to observe, within your own parish or faith community, where God might be working now. Perhaps you can see persons and groups working to restrain toxic forces of resentment or fear. You might see those who are releasing new energies, and empowering

the faithful to care for their neighbors. When we are grounded in a prayerful trust relationship with Jesus, we can receive this power to participate in God's work, to bind and to loose.

Awe And Praise

In today's passage from Romans, Paul concludes his complex reflections on the Jewish people, the emerging Gentile churches, and God's work among them. Paul has struggled to understand the responses of both the Jewish and Gentile communities, with their mix of acceptance and rejection of Jesus. He warns the Roman church to avoid any sense of superiority over Jews or non-Christian Gentiles, for everyone is in need of God's mercy. Paul acknowledges the limits of his understanding, and gives way to prayers of awe and praise. He concludes by marveling at the limitless mercy of God, whose designs are ultimately mysterious.

Sometimes our own prayer can be like that of Paul. In conversation with God, we try to make sense of life, especially its difficulties. The full truth of what's going on in our lives or in our world eludes us, and so we work humbly with the truth that we can understand. If we believe our mysterious God is indeed trustworthy, we can open our hearts in praise, and allow God to shape our lives.

Today's Readings: Is 22:19–23; Ps 138:1–2, 2–3, 6, 8; Rom 11:33–36; Mt 16:13–20

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Sunday Readings
August 23, 2020
Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1

Is 22:19–23

Thus says the LORD to Shebna, master of the palace:

“I will thrust you from your office
and pull you down from your station.
On that day I will summon my servant
Eliakim, son of Hilkiah;
I will clothe him with your robe,
and gird him with your sash,
and give over to him your authority.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
and to the house of Judah.
I will place the key of the House of David on
Eliakim’s shoulder;
when he opens, no one shall shut
when he shuts, no one shall open.
I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot,
to be a place of honor for his family.”

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 138:1–2, 2–3, 6, 8

R. (8bc) Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake
the work of your hands.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my
heart,

for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your
praise;

I will worship at your holy temple.

R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the
work of your hands.

I will give thanks to your name,
because of your kindness and your truth:

When I called, you answered me;
you built up strength within me.

R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the
work of your hands.

The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees,
and the proud he knows from afar.

Your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the
work of your hands.

Reading 2

Rom 11:33–36

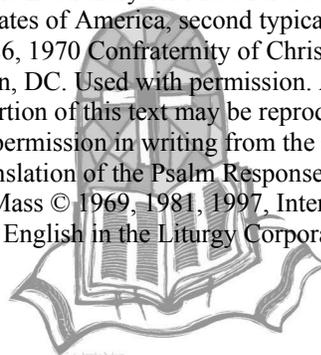
Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and
knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his
judgments and how unsearchable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord
or who has been his counselor?
Or who has given the Lord anything
that he may be repaid?
For from him and through him and for him are all
things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Gospel

Mt 16:13–20

Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and
he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the
Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the
Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one
of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do
you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply,
“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon
son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed
this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say
to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will
build my church, and the gates of the netherworld
shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys
to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on
earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you
loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he
strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was
the Christ.

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Prayer of the Faithful

Let us bring our prayers to God, whose knowledge and wisdom are deep and whose gracious ways are unsearchable.

**For Pope Francis as he guides and forms the Church according to the mandate he has received in succeeding Peter,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those in authority, that they may exercise their responsibilities with wisdom and compassion, especially in dealing with the effects of the pandemic,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For the local leaders in our diocese and parish, both lay and ordained,
let us pray to the Lord.**

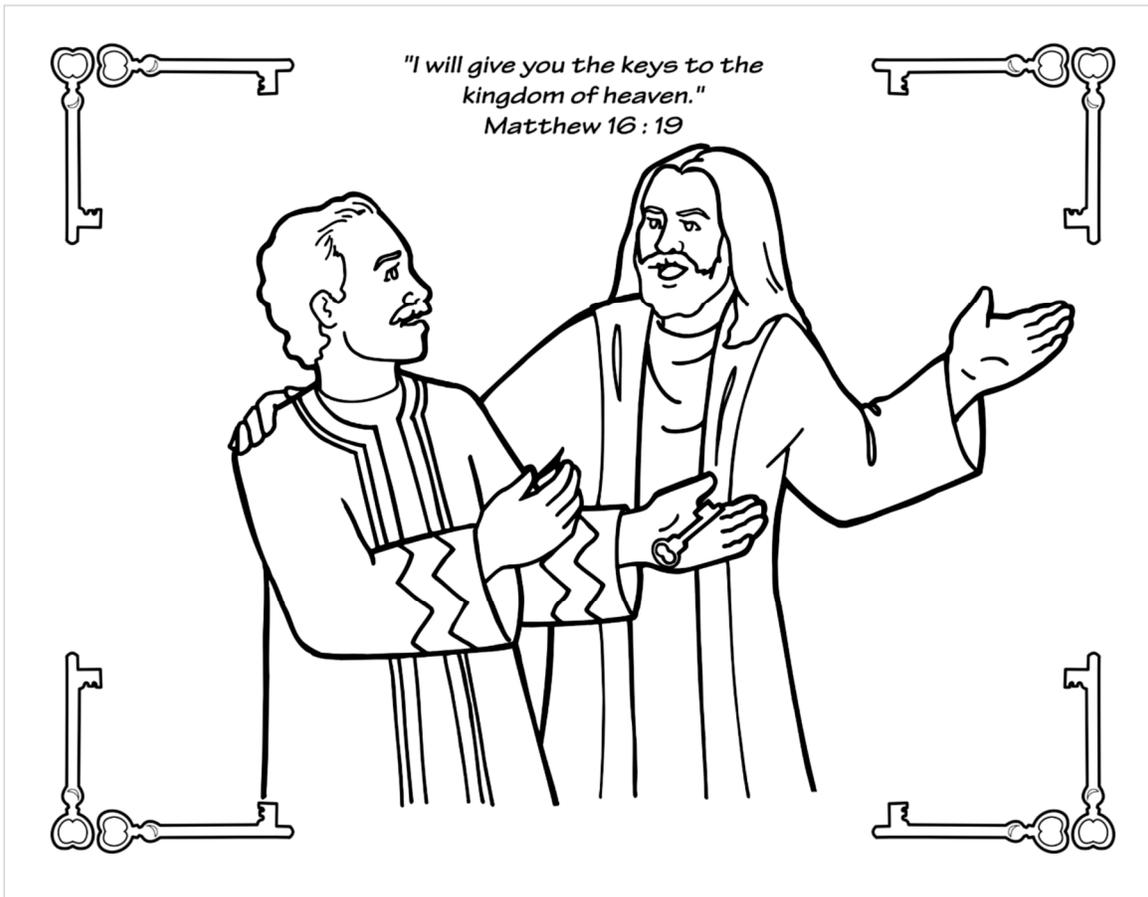
**For teachers and school administrators as they prepare for the beginning of this school year with its special challenges,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are just starting to know who Jesus is: for inquirers and for our children,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from COVID-19, and for all who have died, especially N., N., and N.,
let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken,
let us pray to the Lord.**

O God through whom all things exist, we ask you to hear these prayers and graciously grant them according to your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord.





Letters from Heaven



Start with the letter in the shaded square. Draw a path from letter to letter to complete the Biblical statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left and diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

Simon Peter said to Jesus,
"You are the Messiah, the Son ...

D		G	N
	O	I	G
L	V	H	F
I	E	O	T

O _____ ."

Answer: *of the living God.*

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I AM ...

In today's Gospel Jesus asks Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" How would you answer that question? Talk with the people in your family. Ask everyone for their answer. Then, together, decide what you will write on this line.

I think Jesus is _____

In the Bible, Jesus tells us who he is in several different ways. For each of these Gospel verses, draw a picture of what it describes. (One has been done for you to get you started.) Then, talk with your family about why that image is a good way to think about Jesus; for example, Jesus is like light because he guides us and helps us see the world as God sees it.

I am the light of the world
(John 8:12).

I am the good shepherd
(John 10:11).

I am the way
(John 14:6).

I am the true vine
(John 15:1).



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