



We hope you will use these brief reflections everyday—and find that it helps you to grow closer to Christ. If you would prefer to receive the weekly file by e-mail, just send an e-mail message to [ghilke@neo.rr.com](mailto:ghilke@neo.rr.com) and say “add me to the Take Five list”.

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

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2009

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Get rich quick

The gospel has a get-rich-quick scheme you may not have tried yet. It's fail-safe and works equally well in shaky economic times as in secure ones. It might be called *total divestment*. Jesus offers this plan to the rich fellow who comes to him asking for the secret to inheriting eternal life. Sell everything, Jesus urges him, and give the money to the poor. Once freed from money management, come and be a disciple. The fellow declines. Most of us do. But if we take even a few steps in that direction, how much richer we would be!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Wisdom 7:7-11; Hebrews 4:12-13; Mark 10:17-30 or 10:17-27*  
“How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 12

### A sign that's hard to miss

When in Luke's gospel Jesus uses the phrase “the sign of Jonah,” most of us would think of the whale. But Jesus has something else in mind. Jonah had been a prophet sent by God to convert the pagan city of Nineveh—a job Jonah didn't want. But when he finally buckled down and did what God asked, the people—much to Jonah's astonishment—converted! So for Jesus the “sign of Jonah” recalls the Ninevites' acceptance of God's Word through God's prophet. At the judgment, Jesus says, those Ninevites will shame his own generation because they were humble and smart enough to accept God's invitation. We who have been given the gospel and are surrounded by so many signs of God's love have even less justification for not hearing the Word of God and keeping it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 1:1-7; Luke 11:29-32*

“This generation . . . asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.”

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

### Not all that bad

The Pharisees may have gotten a bit of a bum rap in the New Testament because of events that occurred after Jesus' death. The passages of the New Testament that are most hostile to the Pharisees were compiled at a time when it had become clear that most Jews did not consider Jesus to be the Messiah. The Pharisees may have served as a convenient scapegoat for that rejection. The Pharisaic tradition was in fact more flexible on many questions than it was portrayed to be. It does us well to look and listen carefully and judge slowly when it comes to those who follow a different drummer.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 1:16-25; Luke 11:37-41*

“You Pharisees . . . inside you are full of greed and wickedness.”

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

FEAST OF CALLISTUS I, POPE, MARTYR

### Just another irony

One of the great ironies of our church is that even though Jesus scolds the religious leaders of his day because they love presiding over the assembly and being recognized in public, we still occasionally find such leaders in our parish communities. But the Lord is really good at changing water into wine. Take Saint Callistus (d. 222?). He was such a bad manager that he was twice jailed for his

incompetence. Then they made him pope. Go figure. But that's how God does things. As one of the church's prayers for martyrs says, "You choose the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to you."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 2:1-11; Luke 11:42-46*

*"Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues."*

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

FEAST OF TERESA OF JESUS, VIRGIN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### You're not alone

Much has been written about Saint Teresa of Avila's mystical experiences and reflections on the spiritual life. It would be easy to assume that she had no problem relating to God. But Teresa herself tells us that she had many tough periods in her life when she felt alone, as if God weren't listening or speaking to her. One passage sums up well the kind of struggles she faced and many people today face: "I was by myself, having no one in whom I could find any comfort; unable to pray or read, like a person stunned by heavy trials . . . utterly disquieted and wearied, not knowing what would become of me" (*Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*). Have you ever been there? Persevere, as Teresa did, and trust that even in those moments, God is with you.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 3:21-30; Luke 11:47-54*

*"For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

### Get the facts

It only takes one misleading statistic or statement by a person who is regarded as an "authority"—these days, anyone from a talk show host to a lobbyist to a legislator—to contaminate the public discussion of an important issue. Like yeast, such disinformation spreads invisibly but powerfully, infecting everything it touches. In urgent matters such as healthcare, the economy, or immigration, it is our responsibility as citizens of a great democracy to use due diligence in seeking the relevant facts and to read widely and listen to a broad spectrum of opinions in order to decide for ourselves what we think. It's a lot of work, but a healthy democracy requires it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 4:1-8; Luke 12:1-7*

*"Be aware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy."*

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

FEAST OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, BISHOP, MARTYR

### What's your name?

Groups tend to reflect where people put their loyalty: an ethnicity, political party, nationality, and so on. And when you are part of a group you get to call yourself something: Latino, Republican, American. What makes being Christian a little different, though, is that the loyalty is to a *person*, Jesus. Believe in Jesus and act like it, and you get to bear his name. The early Christian martyr Saint Ignatius was bishop of the city of Antioch, where followers of Jesus were first called *Christians*. What have you done recently to honor this title?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 4:13, 16-18; Luke 12:8-12*

*"And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God."*

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