



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 18, 2009

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### A friend indeed

Have you ever thought or been told that some difficult situation you are facing is “God’s will”? What does that say about the kind of God we believe in? After all, if a friend regularly—and purposefully—hurts us and simply explains that he or she does so for our own good, would we really want to continue a relationship with that person? Why would we think God is like this supposedly helpful friend? Scripture shows us a God who is there not to help us build character but to love and cherish us. God says, unequivocally, “I came to give my life for you.” In difficult times we may want to consider not why God is letting something happen to us but how God is working to help us through it.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 53:10-11; Hebrews 4:14-16; Mark 10:35-45 or 10:42-45*

*“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

### No fooling

Recent books like Jack Miles’ *God: A Biography* trace the changing image of God in Hebrew scripture, pointing out that God is presented in radically different ways. While God is often seen as angry at sin, though, it is in the New Testament that God directly calls a human being a fool! What persuades God to such an insult, however, is an ancient problem: a person who is so self-involved that they have no sense of life’s fragility, no sense of compassion for others, no sense of gratitude toward God. Building up stock in wealth, in stuff, seems logical in a world that judges on the basis of “who has the most toys when they die.” To God, however, that is the height of folly, and God is not afraid to call a fool a fool.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Romans 4:20-25; Luke 12:13-21*

*“You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.”*

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

FEAST OF PAUL OF THE CROSS, PRIEST

### A passion for compassion

While a young man, Saint Paul of the Cross was unsure which direction his life should take—a military or business career? Marriage? Then one day he was listening to a homily on the sufferings of Jesus, and it all made sense to him: He would redirect his life to bring others the message of God’s love expressed in Christ’s Passion. He desired to form a community of the like-minded to pursue this mission, but he had to wait more than two decades—years he spent as a hospital chaplain and traveling preacher—before the church officially gave him permission to found a religious order, the Passionists. It can take time to find one’s calling and be confirmed in it. But the satisfaction is worth the wait.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Romans 5:12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21; Luke 12:35-38*

*“More surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life.”*

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

### What are you driving at?

On the back of countless trucks on our highways appears the curious inquiry: “How is my driving?” The accompanying number to call invites our critique. What if we all came equipped with signs inviting

the moral critique of those around us? We might be surprised and not at all pleased with the feedback. Thankfully, Christianity doesn't rely on external judgment; Jesus even warned against judging others. But we are encouraged to perform our own regular examination of conscience. For everything that we have—life and love, relationships and resources, talent and time—we will one day be accountable.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 6:12-18; Luke 12:39-48*

*"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required."*

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

### All fired up

Jesus shocks his disciples—and many of us as well, no doubt—when he declares that he came not to establish peace but rather division, to “set the earth on fire.” What kind of fire did he have in mind? Fire in biblical times was associated with God's action in the world and the lives of people. Jesus is using strong language to impress upon us the importance of taking responsibility for our spiritual growth. Do our relationships, choices, lifestyles, and loyalties reflect the seriousness of the call to spiritual maturity? If not, what can we do today to begin to put things right?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 6:19-23; Luke 12:49-53*

*"Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth?"*

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

### FEAST OF JOHN OF CAPISTRANO, PRIEST

#### From politico to saint

Wouldn't you love to see some of our politicians dressed in rags and paraded through town sitting backwards on a donkey? In 1416 the governor of Perugia made just such a ride, much to the delight and jeers of the citizens. But it wasn't for messing up the economy. The governor was renouncing his position to join the Franciscans, and the ride was his act of public humility following the example of Saint Francis. The ex-gov, John of Capistrano, went on to preach against errors and heresies all over Italy and Europe and became a great saint. Are there any politicians you know who could do that?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 7:18-25a; Luke 12:54-59*

*"For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."*

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

### Decisions, decisions

One of the choices life offers is whether to let God be part of your life. Of course God is always present, within you and around you, but you can choose to ignore, shut out, or pretend God isn't there. Saint Paul called this “I don't need God attitude” living in “the flesh” and believed this illusion of self-sufficiency hid the road to death. Openness to the divine, though—to the power and Spirit of Christ—guides you to life in God. Find some ways to choose God today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 8:1-11; Luke 13:1-9*

*"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies."*

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