

Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.
Matthew 9

Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time: July 1 - 7, 2012

[Creighton U Online Ministries Home Page](#) | [Daily Reflections](#) | [Online Retreat](#) | [Weekly Guide to Daily Prayer Home](#) | [Student Daily Reflections](#)
[PDF of this Page](#)

Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

On the **Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we hear the wonderful story of the healing of Jairus' daughter. In the middle of that story is the beautiful story of the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.'" Jesus tells Jairus, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." When the girl was healed the people "were utterly astounded."

Tuesday is the **Feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle**. Wednesday in the US is **Independence Day**, when many parishes offer a Mass with special readings.

The first readings this week are from the **Book of the Prophet Amos**. Amos was a shepherd who was called to deliver God's word to the northern kingdom, Israel.

Matthew's Gospel takes us through several stories about Jesus' ministry. We begin as Jesus demonstrates that following him requires a radical change in life: "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." Jesus calms the storm at sea. Then he drives demons out of two men living among the tombs. When a paralyzed man is brought to him, Jesus has compassion on the man and forgives his sins, which causes a controversy. Jesus then heals the man's paralysis. He calls Matthew to leave his customs post and follow him, and the many tax collectors and sinners who come to have dinner with Jesus cause a controversy with the religious leaders. "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Daily Prayer This Week

One of the blessings of reading passages that describe Jesus' ministry is that they can help us become more and more attracted to him. We can become fascinated by his pastoral care for those on the margins of Society or his courage in the face of opposition. The more we watch Jesus, the easier it is for us to fall in love with him. Being drawn to Jesus with growing affection will ultimately lead us to want to be with him and like him.

So each morning this week we can begin our day with a very brief prayer. "Lord, let me see you, love you and desire to follow you more closely today." We might say, "Drive away the demons that tempt my spirit today" on one day and repeat that prayer at various times, especially when we are tempted to look good, or to escape into over-indulgence with food or drink or fantasies, or when we are tempted to let anger get the better of us. On another day, we might pray, "Dear Lord, I get paralyzed sometimes - just stuck and unable to move. Free me today, by reminding me of your love and mercy." Still another day, we might ask, "Let me respond to your call with the freedom Matthew had." We might turn to the Lord some day and simply say, "Lord, I know you desire mercy and not sacrifice, please free me from the judgments I will be tempted to make today." Finally, I might pray, "Lord, pour your new wine into me. Let me be a new wineskin to receive it. Give me the freedom today to let your word transform how I act and how I choose today."

The key to finding intimacy with our God in the midst of our busy lives is to let God's Word interact with the real events and people who are there. No matter what our

When Jesus' disciples are criticized for not fasting, Jesus talks about the difficulty of combining the old and the new. He is calling for something radically new. Not a patch, but new wine in new wineskins.

On the **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary**

Time we read that Jesus was not able to work miracles in his home town. In their eyes, he was just the person they'd seen grow up. This distressed him and he couldn't work many miracles at home.

responsibilities are today, no matter how unrelated they seem to be to faith or devotion, and no matter how busy we might be, we can all let God's Word into the background, in brief moments of connection, conversation and intimacy. All it takes is desire and focus.

As we practice using the background moments of our days, we will grow in experiencing that this intimacy is possible. And, when we sense it and enjoy it, and see what a difference it makes, let's not forget to give thanks each evening for the gifts we have received.

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