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Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

with Indigenous peoples. The Circle takes its name from Our Lady of Guadalupe who Saint John Paul II named the Patroness of the Americas. This devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe demonstrates how the Catholic faith is to be celebrated and lived in Indigenous cultures.

The *Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples* is celebrated annually on December 12th and it normally falls during the second week of the Advent Season. This initiative was started in 2002 by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' through the work of Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council. This Day of Prayer encourages the faithful to pray for the needs and intentions of Indigenous Peoples and to seek from God the wisdom that will inspire and guide us in the efforts to address the past with justice and to walk forward together in peace.

In his homily to Native Peoples of Canada in 1987, St. John Paul II said, "Life in God's kingdom is based on a true sense of solidarity, sharing and community. His is a kingdom of justice, peace and love. It is our task to build a society in which these Gospel values will be applied to every concrete situation and relationship. ... It is a time for reconciliation, for new relationships of mutual respect and collaboration in reaching a truly just solution to unresolved issues." (Homily of His Holiness John Paul II, September 20, 1987)

In 2016, Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle was founded to develop and further relations

The Circle brings together representatives from the Catholic Church in Canada - Indigenous peoples, bishops, priests, lay associations and members of institutes of consecrated life. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle includes membership from seven national Catholic organizations and four Catholic religious orders. Member-at-large positions were created to allow for additional Catholic Indigenous representation. The Circle is committed to making a conscientious effort to ensure a balance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices who are united by their common baptism and faith as Catholics.

The members of the Circle are engaged in renewing and fostering relationships between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The vision of the Circle is "Catholics Engaging in Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples." The Circle describes its mission and purpose to be in four key areas:

- To provide a forum for dialogue to encourage a deeper understanding of the relationships between the Church and Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous spiritual ties in Canada,



- To serve as a united Catholic public voice on relations and dialogue between the Church and Indigenous Peoples,
- To assist Catholics in engagement with the Truth and Reconciliation process and its Calls to Action, and
- To carry out agreed upon initiatives and concrete actions. (OLGC)

These four dimensions of the Circle speak to the importance of listening, of entering into prayer, dialogue, the understanding of indigenous spiritualities, an openness to reconciliation, and the commitment to concrete action. The coming together to form a Circle also serves to communicate the symbolic image of God's presence in their midst and the desire for its members to be united in one voice.

On the First Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis spoke of Advent as a season of awakening to the needs of our brothers and sisters, "The sleep from which we must awake is created by indifference, by vanity, and by the inability to establish

genuinely human relationships and to take care of our brothers and sisters ..." (Pope Francis, December 1, 2019) The Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle seeks to bring about this awakening of the need to be in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters and to speak with one voice in their initiatives to bring this about.

As we celebrate this Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples during the Advent Season, let us embrace a new spirit of accompaniment with our Indigenous brothers and sisters so that we might seek a deeper understanding of one another and thus respond with charity and generosity which is a sure sign of our mutual faith in Christ. As we seek to journey together in Christ, is this not what the Advent Season invites us to do as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas?

Most Rev. William T. McGrattan, *Bishop of Calgary*

December, 2019

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Share stories of your faith in action within your parishes, community, lay associations or at work.

Send your photos and write-ups to communications@calgarydiocese.ca by the 15th of each month.

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Faithfully gives a snapshot of faith at work in the lives of everyday people. It features stories and events that deepen our connection with God through others.

This monthly online publication is sent by email to all subscribers. A print version may be available in your parish.

Sharing our blessing

Written by Joy Gregory



As many as 500 people will make their way to St. Mary's Parish Hall in downtown Calgary's Mission District this coming Sunday afternoon. Drawn by the promise of a warm place to sit and a hot meal to eat, they'll make their way in footwear ranging from sturdy winter boots to wet and worn-out running shoes. While most will arrive unaided, others will lean on canes or walkers and some will push strollers or wheelchairs. They'll eat in shifts, alone or seated alongside family and friends and while all will leave with their physical hunger sated, the vast majority will also carry lighter hearts. For behind the bowls of salad, the hot coffee and the steaming plates of food breathes something truly magnificent: Love.

That love comes from the simple fact that for 49 Sundays of the year, Feed the Hungry (FTH) at St. Mary's Parish Hall is the most popular place to eat in downtown Calgary and while most come to eat, some come to serve.

That awareness of the "something great" is what prompted a group of four Catholic high school chaplains to organize their schools to sponsor a FTH night on Sept 8, 2019. In hindsight, "the timing wasn't ideal, since that was the first Sunday of the new school year," says event coordinator Dawna Richardson. Even so, the chaplain at St. Mary's High School says the event was a phenomenal experience and one she'd consider organizing again.

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FROM IDEA TO EXECUTION

The idea started with a comment by Theodoric Nowak, Director of Social Justice and Outreach Ministries for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary. Nowak, who met with high school chaplains, parish priests and pastoral workers early in the year, noted FTH needed sponsors for three Sunday dinners. Sponsors pay \$5,000 and commit to providing 100 volunteers.

Chaplains from St. Mary's, Bishop O'Byrne, All Saints and Bishop Carroll came aboard after discussing the idea with administrators at their schools. "Each school agreed to find 25 volunteers and I divided up the shifts so each shift had a mix of schools represented," explains Richardson. "This way, each school had their share of the jobs everyone wants to do (like serve meals) and jobs that are more difficult to arrange (like washing dishes)." The four chaplains and some staff members from the schools volunteered from start to finish.

To avoid the hubbub of the first week of school, organizers raised the money during Lent 2019 and handled the field trip permission slips before the summer break. When Richardson's school had a few openings left in early September, Bella Nguyen was one of the new Grade 10 students who stepped up. "It was really wonderful being there where so many people were working together," says Nguyen. Now a member of St. Mary's Student Action Leadership Team, she's grateful for opportunities to show her Catholic faith in action.

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SERVICE IS A BLESSING

Bishop O’Byrne chaplain Deborah Eberle says the experience “was a blessing for each student that came forward. It was eye opening, especially for our first-time volunteers.” She credits the FTH experience, which she’s shared at school celebrations, for a rise in the number of new volunteers who participate in social justice projects, including one where students make sandwiches for the Mustard Seed.

Because the four high schools draw from different socio-economic demographics, each of the four chaplains worked with her own school to raise their share of the \$5,000. St Mary’s held a number of fundraisers during Lent. At O’Byrne, students paid to “force” a social studies teacher to stay after school and play his least-favourite video game. “The more they gave, the longer he played.”

Eberle and Richardson say the experience drove home the fact that students in Calgary’s Catholic high schools are looking for ways to be of service. “I just knew it was a good idea and that we could work together to make this happen,” says Eberle.

“It’s not difficult to get students involved in projects like this. We’re just providing an opportunity for them to do what they want to do,” adds Richardson.

FTH is about more than helping people who are hungry, she adds. “It gives vulnerable people an opportunity to be taken care of by people who care about people. It’s great for our students to see this kind of love in action and to be part of it and to know that what you have is not only given to you, it’s given to you for the common good, for the good of all.”



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Note: Dec. 28/29 is the last weekend to give in order to get the 2019 tax receipt, or you can give online by Dec. 31 at iamblessed.ca

The real blessing is...

Shared by Dr. Thomas Fung, parishioner of Holy Spirit Parish in Calgary, Vice President of Calgary Catholic Medical Association.



Tonight, as I was driving by a parking lot in the bleak and snowy weather, feeling downcast and discouraged by difficulties from recent weeks, I saw a guy dumpster-diving in a clothing donations bin in the dark. Pulling over to ask if there was anything I can do to help, I was shocked to see a guy probably in his 30's, not older than me.

He said what he needed most was a warm pair of gloves to make it through the cold night, as his were full of holes. Since all the stores were closed, I offered him mine, though they were rather worn. He hesitated, but I insisted that he tried them on – they fit. The look on his face was one of genuine happiness and gratitude, over just my old worn pair of gloves. My heart ached. We made a run to Tim's to get some food, and I let him know about the Feed The Hungry program every Sunday at St. Mary's. He shared with me that he went to a Catholic school growing up, so I asked him if there was anything I can help pray for. Looking away, he stood silent for what seemed like a minute, neither speaking or moving. Then, with tears in his eyes, he asked me to pray for his two kids whom he hasn't seen in a long time. I promised I would pray for him, and in your charity, I ask that you please pray for Mike and his kids too. He was so grateful, but to me he was the real blessing tonight, as he snapped me out of focusing on myself and my own problems. God bless Mike, and may he receive all the graces and help needed to be reunited with his kids. #iamblessed

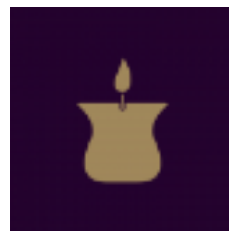
UPCOMING EVENTS



Anniversary of Cathedral Dedication

Dec.11, 2019 at 5pm

St. Mary's Cathedral at
1219 18 Avenue SW. Calgary, AB



Advent Reconciliation Services

In parishes throughout
the Diocese of Calgary

See schedule at
<http://catholicyc.ca/blog/advent>



Christmas Season Mass Times in the Diocese

Find Christmas Season Mass Times in
parishes throughout the Diocese of
Calgary

See schedule at
<http://catholicyc.ca/blog/christmas>



Advent and Christmas Celebrations

Check out our diocesan online
calendar for Advent Mission, Parish
Concerts and Christmas Carolling
activities.

View all events at
<http://news.calgarydiocese.ca>

Partners in Hope

Written by Sr. Madeleine Gregg, fcj

During the 2018-2019 school year, Shannon Griffin, principal of St. Damien School, a Calgary Catholic Elementary School contacted me about how her school could partner with the Christian Life Centre and the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus to do something good for our Church and world. I knew that the Centre offers a special retreat each January, free of charge, for unemployed people, and that finding funding for that retreat is a challenge, given the current downturn in Calgary's economy. The retreat does nothing to help people find a job; rather, it is a "heart-helping" retreat to offer support, encouragement and a renewed appreciation of each one's personal gifts in a time when people feel quite vulnerable and often depressed. The weekend experience is called "The Gift of Hope".

Together, the principal and I devised a plan: I went out to her school and met with all the students, by grade-level groups. I told them about the unemployment retreat and asked, "If people do not have enough money to pay their bills, would they have money to go to a retreat centre and attend a retreat that's meant to help their hearts?" "No," they chorused. So, I invited them to go home and offer to do four little jobs that are NOT their ordinary chores and to ask their moms to give them 25 cents for each job. When they had earned four quarters, they were to trade them in for a looney and bring it to school. If every child at school was able to bring in a looney, the school could pay for someone to make the retreat. They would be retreat sponsors!

Then, Ms. Griffin wrote a letter home to the families, explaining what we were trying to do and giving the target date for the looney collection. And a few weeks later, I went to the school, and they held an assembly and presented me with a cheque for \$1,103.55! I couldn't believe my eyes! I had no sooner received the cheque when a teacher came up and asked,



Sr. Madeleine Gregg receiving a cheque from St. Damien's School.

"How much more would we have to give to pay for four retreatants?" When I told her, she took out her cheque book and wrote another cheque for \$36.45 right on the spot! What a blessing!

When I returned home and told the Sisters and the others who work at the Christian Life Centre, there was such joy. So many were touched by the children's and families' generosity. We feel a real sense of being partners in hope with the school community at St. Damien School!

A time for healing, community and renewed strength

Written by: Joy Gregory



St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

Parishioners of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church on the Piikani Nation will arrive at the Christmas Eve mass a bit early; the church is relatively small and the place is likely to be packed. Upon entering the wooden building, the faithful will pause near the front door, using their hands to waft sweet grass smoke over their heads and arms. Smudging is an indigenous spiritual practice that's used to bless or purify people before meaningful ceremonies. At St. Paul's, the smudge bowl is side-by-side with the holy water. It is a practice Fr. Roy Jayamaha embraced when he arrived at the country church nearly four years ago.

Having worked in Catholic communities in Pakistan, where more than 98 percent of people practice Islam, the Sri Lankan-born priest knows that meaningful inter-cultural dialogue requires action. "I feel the main pastoral work here is to lift high the spirit of our people and respect their rich culture, I always try to find connections to meet them with Creator."

St. Paul's is located in Brocket, a rural community about 20 km from Pincher Creek. Since Fr. Roy's arrival, the church has added a tipi-shaped tabernacle. Other altar and church hall adornments also feature the work of local indigenous artists.

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Parishioners appreciate the integration of their cultural practices and symbols, says Vera Potts, who has served as parish council chair since Fr. Roy arrived. A mother of three, grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of 11, the 80-year-old Potts takes that same attitude of a willing servant to work with her every day at the local health clinic, where she still works full time.

A residential school survivor, Potts admits she can be overwhelmed by fearful memories of that experience. "I've learned to forgive. But being human, it's hard to forget and a lot of triggers happen still today." Nevertheless, her faith provides consolation and hope. "I can trust in the Lord. He's the only one in the world who could pull me through what I experienced."

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BUILDING COMMUNITY

Once open mostly for Sundays and funerals, St. Paul's began offering Sunday and daily masses when Fr. Roy arrived in 2016. While this country pastor typically celebrates the 5 p.m. daily mass alone, people are coming to the Sunday service. Many of them stay after mass to share food and fellowship in the basement hall. These informal gatherings include full meals after masses that celebrate major feast days or important events. The potlucks attract Catholics and non-Catholics alike and all the food is donated. "In our culture, the elders teach us never to be stingy with food. We share food. We live by that," says Potts, noting that Christ taught the same.

Parishioners also volunteer their time to maintain the church and grounds, which includes a grotto and a small-scale replica of the first church that once served a Catholic residential school located about 7 km from present-day St. Paul's.

Since Fr. Roy's arrival, St. Paul's has upgraded the church, liturgical items, put a new roof on the replica church, renovated the church hall and painted the rectory. All of the work was financed by parish fundraisers, Mission Council, good friends and generous benefactors. This fall, parishioners raised \$2,000 towards the church insurance bill by volunteering with a local catering company. Earlier in the year, they added another \$1,000 by hosting a giant garage sale.

"Father Roy makes us really work," says Potts with a laugh. "All of what we have is through fundraising. We're not a rich reserve, but we take a lot of pride in what we have."

Like Fr. Roy, Potts is pleased that 19 Piikani children received First Communion at St. Paul's in 2018. Another four were confirmed by Bishop William McGrattan in 2019. With time, Potts is hopeful more people will bring their children to mass and receive the sacraments. "We need parents to be really taking responsibility for teaching their own children the importance of Christianity."

Her comments mirror Deacon Thomas O'Toole's thoughts about his work at St. Paul's. O'Toole, who also serves as a deacon at St. Peter's in Northwest Calgary, admits some might note the differences between the parishes he serves, one in a First Nation community of 3,500 people, the other in a suburban neighbourhood of Alberta's largest city.

O'Toole focuses on the similarities. He hopes parishioners at both churches "grow together in love for Jesus, Mary and Joseph such that they will be a light for others." Like Potts, he also wants Catholics "to engage with the sacraments and come to know the great love God has for us."

For Fr. Roy, a willingness to be a witness of Christ's love sometimes means inviting locals, including some homeless men, to share a meal with him at the rectory. He also takes homeless men with him when he participates in an annual highway cleanup day and offers a hot meal in exchange for their labour and company. "As far as I know, our parish is the only parish that goes for highway cleanup with their pastor and the deacon," says Fr. Roy.

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DROP BY DROP, A RIVER FORMS

That same spirit of sharing what you have prompted Potts to suggest an addition to this year's Christmas Eve mass. Earlier in the year, Fr. Roy gave jars to parishioners. Since then, each family has "put coins in there and at midnight mass they can put their jars at the crib," says Potts.

The offerings, made with love and humility, show the community's love of Christ and its appreciation for their church. "The sacred rituals and the holy place are so dear to their hearts," says Fr. Roy.

The little country church he shepherds also hosts AA meetings, gospel music nights and interdenominational healing services. Plans are underway to restore and preserve the Our Lady of Lourdes grotto built at the residential school some 75 years ago. Every year, St. Paul's holds an outdoor mass at that grotto, which many locals visit as a pilgrimage. The annual mass attracts residential school survivors who attended Catholic and Anglican schools in the area.

Fr. Roy is hopeful that recent changes at St. Paul's are evidence of what Pope Francis has called the Church to do. Speaking at the closing mass of the Amazon Synod held in October, the Pope said, "how many times, even in the Church, have the voices of the poor not been heard and perhaps scoffed at or silenced because they are inconvenient."

Reflecting on his time at St. Paul's, Fr. Roy says faith and fellowship are fueling positive change at Piikani Nation. "Drop by drop, it's becoming a river."



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Canada & the World

This section compiles the top four news of interest to the Catholic community.



Premier highlights religious freedom in a diverse society

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney is reviving the tradition of a provincial Christian prayer breakfast. "We need to be mindful of the need to maintain the basic respect for religious freedom in our public square."



Pope Francis: Display Nativity scenes in home and public places

"I wish to encourage the beautiful family tradition of preparing the nativity scene in the days before Christmas, but also the custom of setting it up in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares."



Remains of Vietnamese migrants returned

The remains of Vietnamese citizens who were found dead in a refrigerated truck in Britain have arrived back in Vietnam while more migrants drowned in the Mediterranean Sea.



Diocese of London launches fund for the poor

Bishop Fabbro said he was inspired by Jesus' preferential love for the poor and the example of Pope Francis in choosing the World Day of the Poor to launch the \$1 million fund.

JANUARY 2020

Liturgical Calendar

2019-2020 Year - A Series II

(S) Solemnity, (F) Feast, (M) Memorial, (M>OM) Memorial reduced to an Optional Memorial (OM) Optional Memorial. (*) no assigned rank
Lect., Wkday, A.B: *Lectionary, Weekday, A* (1993) or *B* (1994)
Lect., S&S: *Lectionary, Sunday and Solemnities* (2009)
BG: *Book of Gospels* (2015)
RL: *Lectionary, Ritual Masses, Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, Votive Masses, Masses for the Dead* (2014)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5 EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Readings: no. 20, p. 91; BG, p. 48 1st Reading: Isaiah 60.1-6 2nd Reading: Ephesians 3.2-3a, 5-6 Gospel: Matthew 2.1-12</p>	<p>6 ferial Readings: no. 212, p. 91 1st Reading: 1 John 3.22-4.6 Gospel: Matthew 4.12-17, 23-25</p>	<p>7 ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE (M) Readings: no. 213, p. 93, or no. 510B, p. 622; BG, no. 100, p. 286 1st Reading: 1 John 4.7-10 Gospel: Mark 6.34-44</p>	<p>1 <i>Octave of Christmas Ends</i> THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD Readings: Lect., S&S, no. 18, p. 83; BG, p. 45 1st Reading: Numbers 6.22-27 2nd Reading: Galatians 4.4-7 Gospel: Luke 2.16-21 ~ World Day of Peace ~</p>	<p>2 <i>Season of Christmas Begins</i> ST. BASIL THE GREAT and ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN (M) Readings: no. 205, p. 77, or no. 510, p. 619 1st Reading: 1 John 2.22-28 Gospel: John 1.19-28</p>	<p>3 ferial Readings: no. 206, p. 79 1st Reading: 1 John 2.29-3.1-6 Gospel: John 1.29-34 OM: The Most Holy Name of Jesus</p>	<p>4 ferial Readings: no. 207, p. 81 1st Reading: 1 John 3.7-10 Gospel: John 1.35-42</p>
<p>12 <i>Season of Christmas Ends</i> BAPTISM OF THE LORD (F) Readings: no. 21, p. 95; BG, p. 50 1st Reading: Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7 2nd Reading: Acts 10.34-38 Gospel: Matthew 3.13-17</p>	<p>13 <i>Ordinary Time Begins</i> ferial Readings: no. 305, Series II, p. 240 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 1.1-8 Gospel: Mark 1.14-20 OM: St. Hilary</p>	<p>14 ferial Readings: no. 306, p. 242 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 1.9-20 Gospel: Mark 1.21-28</p>	<p>15 ferial Readings: no. 307, p. 245 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 3.1-10, 19-20 Gospel: Mark 1.29-39 OM: St. Raymond of Penyafort</p>	<p>16 ferial Readings: no. 308, p. 247 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 4.1-11 Gospel: Mark 1.40-45</p>	<p>17 ST. ANTHONY (M) Readings: no. 309, p. 250, or no. 513, p. 626 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 8.4-7, 10-22a Gospel: Mark 2.1-12</p>	<p>18 ferial Readings: no. 310, p. 252 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 9.1-4, 17-19; 10.1a Gospel: Mark 2.13-17 OM: Our Lady's Saturday ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>
<p>19 2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Readings: no. 64, p. 440; BG, p. 266 1st Reading: Isaiah 49.3, 5-6 2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1.1-3 Gospel: John 1.29-34 ~ World Day of Migrants and Refugees ~ ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>	<p>20 ferial Readings: no. 311, p. 255 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 15.16-23 Gospel: Mark 2.18-22 OM: St. Fabian OM: St. Sebastian ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>	<p>21 ST. AGNES (M) Readings: no. 312, p. 257, or no. 516, p. 628 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 16.1-13a Gospel: Mark 2.23-28</p>	<p>22 ferial Readings: no. 313, p. 260 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 17.32-33, 37, 40-51 Gospel: Mark 3.1-6 OM: St. Vincent ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>	<p>23 ferial Readings: no. 314, p. 263 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 18.6-9; 19.1-7 Gospel: Mark 3.7-12</p>	<p>24 ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (M) Readings: no. 315, p. 265, or no. 518, p. 628 1st Reading: 1 Samuel 24.2-20 Gospel: Mark 3.13-19 ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>	<p>25 THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE (F) Readings: Lect., Wkday A, no. 519, p. 628; BG, no. 58, p. 244 1st Reading: Acts 22.3-16 or 1st Reading: Acts 9.1-22 Gospel: Mark 16.15-18</p>
<p>26 3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Readings: no. 67, p. 443; BG, p. 267 1st Reading: Isaiah 9.1-4 2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1.10-13, 17-18 Gospel: Matthew 4.12-23</p>	<p>27 ferial Readings: no. 317, p. 271 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 5.1-7, 10 Gospel: Mark 3.22-30 OM: St. Angela Merici ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~</p>	<p>28 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (M) Readings: no. 318, p. 273, or no. 522, p. 634 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 6.12b-15, 17-19 Gospel: Mark 3.31-35</p>	<p>29 ferial Readings: no. 319, p. 275 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7.1-17++ Gospel: Mark 4.1-20</p>	<p>30 ferial Readings: no. 320, p. 278 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7.18-19, 24-29 Gospel: Mark 4.21-25</p>	<p>31 ST. JOHN BOSCO (M) Readings: no. 321, p. 281, or no. 523, p. 634 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 11.1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17 Gospel: Mark 4.26-34</p>	



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GIVE

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PRAY

Offer a prayer to God for others: a rosary, a novena or go to Mass for someone's intentions.

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