

ENGLISH - TONY - 2nd WEEK IN ORD TIME - 2026

Jan 19 Monday: **Mk 2:18-22:** *18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. 21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins."*

The context: Today's Gospel passage gives Jesus' reply to the question raised, perhaps by some well-meaning Pharisees who were disciples of John the Baptist, asking why Jesus' disciples ate and drank and feasted, while they (John the Baptist's disciples), and the Pharisees in general, fasted and prayed. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were the three cardinal religious practices -- the "good deeds" -- of Jewish religious life.

Jesus' reply: Jesus responded to their sincere question using three metaphors: the metaphor of the "children of the bridal chamber," the metaphor of patching torn clothing, and the metaphor of wineskins. First, Jesus compared his disciples with the children of the bridal chamber. These were the selected friends of the bride and groom who feasted in the company of the bride and groom during a week of honeymoon. Nobody expected them to fast. Jesus assured the questioners that his disciples would fast when the Bridegroom (Jesus himself), was taken away from them. In other words, fasting is necessary when we sin, and our union with Christ begins to fade, as happens when we get addicted to evil habits and evil tendencies, leading us to sin. As Catholic Christians, we are uniquely blessed to experience Jesus' presence in the Eucharist. In the same way, we are to welcome both the joys of Christian life and the crosses it offers us. But Joy is the chief characteristic of a Christian -- Joy even in tribulation. Using the comparisons of the danger of using new, unshrunk cloth to make a patch for an old garment, or old wineskins to store new, still-fermenting wine, Jesus told the questioners that they must have more elastic and open minds and larger hearts to understand and follow his new

ideas which were, in many cases, different from traditional Jewish teachings. Jesus is challenging us to be open to radical transformation so that we may receive him and, with his grace, reflect his love, mercy, and forgiveness to others._

Life message: 1) We need to be adjustable Christians with open and elastic minds and hearts. The Holy Spirit, working actively in the Church and guiding the Church's teaching authority (the *Magisterium*), enables the Church to put into practice new visions, new ideas, new adaptations, and new ways of worship in place of old ones. So, we should have the generosity and good will to follow the teachings of the Church. At the same time, we need the Old Testament revelations, the New Testament teachings, and the Sacred Tradition of the Church as main sources of our Christian Faith.) We need to gain spiritual strength by fasting, prayer, and penance, especially when we separate ourselves from Christ by our sins.

Jan 20 Tuesday: St. Fabian, Pope, Martr; St. Sebastian Martyr:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-Fabian-Pope-and-saint-Sebastian-Martyr>) *Mk 2:23-28: 23As [Jesus] was passing through a field of grain on the sabbath, his disciples began to make a path while picking the heads of grain.f 24At this the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?"25He said to them, "Have you never read what David did* when he was in need and he and his companions were hungry? 26How he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest and ate the bread of offering that only the priests could lawfully eat, and shared it with his companions?" 27Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man,* not man for the sabbath.i 28* That is why the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.*

The context: Today's Gospel passage gives us Jesus' teaching on the purpose of the Sabbath and on its proper observance. This was his response to a criticism and a silly accusation made by Pharisees against his disciples who, on a Sabbath, to satisfy their hunger, plucked ears of grain from a field and ate the grains after removing the husks by rubbing the grains between their palms and blowing away the chaff. The Pharisees accused them of violating Sabbath laws by performing three items of work forbidden on Sabbath, namely, harvesting, threshing and winnowing.

Counterarguments: According to Matthew Jesus gives three counterarguments from Holy Scripture defending his apostles. (1) Basic human needs, like hunger, take precedence over Divine worship and Sabbath observance. Jesus cites from the Scripture the example of the hungry David and his selected soldiers. They approached Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, who gave them for food the “offering bread” which only the priests were allowed to eat (1 Sm 21:1-6). (2) No law can stand against Divine worship. That is why the priests were not considered as violating Sabbath laws although they did the work of preparing two rams for sacrifice in the Temple (Nm 28:9-10). (3) God desires that we practice mercy: Jesus quotes the prophet Hosea to tell the accusers God’s words: “*I want mercy, not sacrifice*” (Hos 6:6).

Life messages: Like the Jewish Sabbath, the Christian Sunday is to be 1) a day for rest and refreshment with members of the family; 2) a day for thanksgiving and the recharging of spiritual batteries, through participation in the Eucharistic celebration (for Catholics) and through (a worship service for the Non-Catholics); 3) a day parents should use for teaching religious Faith and Bible lessons to their children; 4) a day for doing works of charity in the neighborhood and in the parish; 5) a day for socializing with family members, neighbors, and fellow parishioners.

Jan 21 Wednesday: St. Agnes, Virgin, Martyr: For a brief account of her life, Click on: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-agnes/>

Mk 3:1-6: *1 There was a man there with a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." 4 And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

The context: Today’s Gospel describes a miraculous healing done by Jesus on one Sabbath as a public violation of Sabbath law intended to demonstrate that God’s intention for the Sabbath was *to do good and to save life rather than to do evil or to destroy life*.

The incident and the reaction: Ex 20:8 and Dt 5:12 instructed the Jews to *keep the Sabbath holy*. But the Scribes and the Pharisees had so amplified God's law on the Sabbath by misinterpreting it and had, through man-made laws, made it almost impossible for common people to keep perfectly. Jesus wanted to demonstrate in public the original intention of God in declaring the Sabbath holy. For Jesus, the Sabbath was a day of rest to be used in adoring God, learning and teaching His laws, and doing good to/for others. Hence, Jesus took the liberty of granting healing to a man with a withered hand in the local synagogue immediately after the worship service, thus infuriating the scribes and the Pharisees.

Life messages: 1) Our Catholic Christian Sabbath, that is, our Sunday, observance of participating in the Eucharistic celebration is meant to recharge our spiritual batteries for doing good to/for others and avoiding evil. 2) Our Sunday observance is also meant to be an offering of our lives to God on the altar, to ask His pardon and forgiveness for our sins, to present our needs before the Lord and to participate in the Divine Life by Holy Communion. 3) Sunday is also a day for us to spend time with the members of the family and to participate in the activities of our parish and neighborhood.

Jan 22 Thursday Mk 3:7-12: *7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea 8 and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from about Tyre and Sidon a great multitude, hearing all that he did, came to him. 9 And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they should crush him; 10 for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. 11 And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12 And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.*

The context: Today's Gospel describes how both Jews and Gentiles from Galilee and all surrounding areas gathered around Jesus practically every day of his public ministry of preaching and healing. Jesus preached the Good News of God's love and demonstrated by his healing ministry the mercy and compassion of God the Father.

Jesus' mission was universal, attracting Jews and pagans alike. He exercised his Divine power of healing, using his human body to demonstrate to the people that

he was both God and man. Jesus instructed the healed ones not to publicize him as the expected Messiah because he did not want to bring his public life to a premature end. The ordinary Jews believed that the expected Messiah would declare himself King of the Jews after overthrowing the Roman rule. Hence, it was dangerous to let people regard him as the Messiah.

Life message: 1) Jesus continues to preach the Good News and heal the sick through his Church and through us, his followers. He welcomes our response to him and calls us to come to him through the Sacraments, especially through our participation in the Eucharistic celebration with trusting Faith and confident expectation. *“The holy human nature of our Lord is our only route to salvation; it is the essential means we must use to unite ourselves to God. Thus, we can today approach our Lord by means of the sacraments, especially and pre-eminently the Eucharist. And through the sacraments there flows to us, from God, through the human nature of the Word, a strength which cures those who receive the sacraments with faith (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, “Summa Theologiae”, III, q. 62, a. 5).*

Jan 23 Friday: **St. Vincent, Deacon, Martyr (USA); St. Marianne Cope, Virgin (USA):** <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day-saint-Vincent/Deacon> or <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day-saint-marianne-cope-virgin>

Mk 3:13-19: 13 And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. 4 And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons: 16 Simon whom he surnamed Peter; 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew [Nathaniel], and Matthew [Levi], and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Then he went home. (& Lk 6: 12-16)

The context: Today’s Gospel passage gives a short account of the call and mission of the Apostles. Jesus is the first missionary. He, the Only-begotten Son of the Father, was sent to this world, and particularly to His Chosen People, to proclaim “Good News” that God, his Father and ours, is a loving, merciful, and forgiving Father Who wants to save everyone through His Son Jesus. Today’s Gospel describes how Jesus selects and empowers twelve future missionaries as apostles,

giving them his own mission along with a share of his power to preach, and to heal the sick as proof of the truth of their message. Then, Jesus sends them in pairs to the Jewish towns and villages as heralds, to prepare the people he is going to visit in Person to receive the Good News.

Special features: Jesus selected very ordinary people, most of them hard-working fishermen with no social status, learning, or political influence, because he was sure that they would be very effective instruments in God's hands. It was a strange mixture of people. Matthew (Levi) was a hated tax-collector for a foreign power, while Simon the Cananaean was a Zealot and fanatical nationalist who belonged to a militant group determined to destroy Roman rule by any means. The others were mostly professional fishermen with a lot of good will, patience and stamina. At first it was only their admiration and love for Jesus that united them. Jesus selected them after a night of prayer and gave them his own powers of healing and exorcism and his own mission of preaching the "Kingdom of God."

Life messages: 1) As Christians, we have the same mission that Jesus entrusted to his apostles: to proclaim the word of God to all the world. 2) We fulfill this mission primarily by living out Jesus' teachings and by promoting and helping the world-wide missionary activities of the Church with prayer, moral support, and financial aid.

Jan 24 Saturday: St Francis De Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church: For a brief account, click on: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day-saint-francis-de-sales-bishop-doctor-of-the-Church>

Mk 3:20-21: *Then he went home; 20 and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for people were saying, "He is beside himself."*

The context: Today's Gospel tells us how Jesus' relatives and fellow villagers, wrongly judging him as out of his mind, tried to take him by force back to Nazareth, his home, to concentrate on doing his safe, secure job as a good carpenter. That might be one reason why Jesus once remarked, "*a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.*" (Mt 10:36). However, Jesus met their opposition with grace and continued to live out his Messianic Mission, quietly determined to fulfill his Father's will.

There were five reasons why Jesus' family might have thought he was mad and, so, attempted to end his preaching and healing mission. First, Jesus had abandoned his safe, secure job as a much-needed village carpenter with a steady income to become a wandering preacher with no residence or steady income. Second, Jesus had chosen a band of fishermen with no political or social influence, a hated tax-collector and a fanatic zealot among his disciples. Third, Jesus had begun to criticize the power lobby – the chief priests, elders, scribes, and Pharisees - in the Jewish religion's headquarters, Jerusalem, labeling them hypocrites. Jesus' relatives might also have been afraid that Jesus would be arrested, and they would be persecuted with him for criticizing those in power. Fourth, Jesus had indirectly claimed to be the long-awaited Messiah and had worked miracles to support his claim. Fifth, they might have been jealous of Jesus' huge popularity throughout Palestine.

Life messages: 1) Since Jesus experienced rejection by his own relatives, he can sympathize with the hurt and rejection we receive from our family members and console us in our pain. 2) Let us learn to forgive the modern “liberal-minded” people who find our Christian beliefs and practice “crazy,” and face them with the courage of our convictions based on Christ's Divine authority and the reliability of his doctrines and promises. 3) Let us remember that many saints, following Christ's example, have been taken for madmen -- but they were “mad” with loving, holy love for Jesus Christ, their God. Fr. Tony

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