

28TH WEEK IN ORD TIME YEAR A

Oct 12-17: **Oct 12 Monday: Lk 11:29-32:** *29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.*

The context: Since there had been many false prophets and false messiahs in the past, and since their pride and prejudice did not permit them to see the Messiah in a carpenter-from-Nazareth turned wandering-preacher, the Jewish religious leaders demanded that Jesus should show some "Messianic" signs and miracles taken from their list. They would not accept that Jesus' numerous miraculous healings were the Messianic signs foretold by the prophets.

Jesus' negative response: Calling them an apostate generation who refused to believe in their own prophets and denied the hand of God in the miracles he worked, Jesus warned these religious leaders that they would be condemned on the Day of Judgment by the people of Nineveh and by the Queen of Sheba from the South. (**Sheba**, or **Saba**, was a southern kingdom centred on **Yemen** or **Ethiopia**, and possibly including both. The distance from Yemen to Jerusalem is 2084 miles). This is one of the instances in

which Jesus held up Gentiles as models of Faith and goodness (other examples: the Canaanite woman in Mt 15, the centurion in Lk 7, the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10; etc.). The pagan Ninevites heard the voice of the Lord God in the prophet Jonah, repented, and were spared. The Queen of Sheba recognized God's Wisdom in King Solomon, and she traveled to Israel to receive more of it. Nevertheless, Jesus gave the religious leaders challenging him, "the sign of Jonah." It was the undeniable Messianic sign of his own Resurrection from the tomb on the third day after his death, just as Jonah had spent three days repenting and praying in the belly of the giant fish before being spat out upon the land and finally going to Nineveh to accomplish the mission God had originally given him (Jonah 2:1-10).

Life messages: We need to recognize God-given signs in our lives: 1) Each Sacrament in the Church is an external sign representing God's grace. 2) On the altar we re-present Christ's sacrifice on the cross using liturgical signs and prayers. 3) Everyone living with us or working with us is a sign of God's living presence in our midst, inviting us to love and honor him or her as God's child and the living Temple of the Holy Spirit. 4) All world events and all the events in our lives are signs of God's care and protection for us, His children. 5) The Holy Bible is a sign of God communicating His message to us every day. So, let us learn from these God-given signs instead of looking for signs in weeping Madonnas, bleeding crucifixes and daily messages of visionaries.

Oct 13: Tuesday: Lk 11: 37-41: Lk 11:37-41: *37 While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him; so he went in and sat at table. 38 The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. 39 And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup*

and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.

The context: In today's Gospel passage, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of hypocrisy. Jesus was invited by a Pharisee for a dinner at which Jesus violated the ceremonial law by purposely omitting the ritual washing of hands before the meals and between the courses. Pious Jews were expected on each occasion to wash their hands by pouring two ounces of water from finger tips to wrist and in the reverse order, and then to cleanse each palm by rubbing it with the fist of the other hand. Water was stored in big stone jars for this washing ceremony. Omitting the ceremony was considered a sin by Pharisees, and that is why Jesus' host was *astonished*.

Jesus teaches the essence of religion: Jesus tells his host that the essence of religion is offering to God a clean heart filled with love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. Mere external observance of rituals without a cleansing of the heart is hypocrisy, which God hates. Jesus uses the occasion to accuse the Pharisees of harboring evil thoughts like greed, pride, bitterness, envy, and arrogance in their hearts. Jesus concludes by suggesting that one method of expressing real love of God and neighbor originating from a compassionate heart and making one pure and clean is giving alms to the poor. Almsgiving in the proper sense means realizing the needs of others and letting them share in one's own goods, especially by way of spiritual help, financial and emotional support, consolation, fraternity, and love. St. John of the Cross explains this passage, remarking that "*in the evening of life*" we will be judged on our love expressed by works of charity.

Life messages: 1) In order to have interior cleanliness, let us do some charitable acts which externally express our loving relationship with God and our eagerness to do His will. 2) Since we are offering our hearts and lives on the altar, let us expel everything evil from our hearts by true repentance. Love is what we have to give others – love with understanding, mercy, respect for their freedom, and deep concern for their spiritual and material welfare. Giving this gift requires that we have God's love in our thoughts, words and actions always.

Oct 14 Wednesday; St. Callistus I, Pope, Martyr:

<http://franciscanmedia.beracha.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-callistus-i>

Lk 11:42-46: 42 *"But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market places. 44 Woe to you! for you are like graves which are not seen, and men walk over them without knowing it." 45 One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also." 46 And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers."*

The context: In today's text, taken from Luke's Gospel, Jesus expresses his moral indignation and sorrow at the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees who have put obstacles between the common people and God by overburdening them with unnecessary, impractical, and almost limitless interpretations of Mosaic laws. In today's text, Jesus levels three accusations against these religious leaders, naming particular misbehaviors: 1) They have misinterpreted the spirit of the Law, making

the Law a heavy burden for the God-fearing common people. Jesus gives the Law of tithing as an example. God intended tithing for His people as an expression of their gratitude to a providing God (Dt 14:22; Lv 27:30). The scribes instructed the people to pay tithes on insignificant things, such as kitchen-garden plants, with great mathematical accuracy, but they themselves neglected *justice and love of God* in their private lives. 2) The second accusation is that the scribes and the Pharisees are notorious for their status-seeking. They demand that the common people give them special honors because of their expertise in Mosaic Law and faithful religious observance. As a mark of respect, they are to be given front seats in the synagogue and public greeting in the streets. 3) Jesus compares the scribes and Pharisees to the white-washed tombs on the sides of the road leading to Jerusalem. In preparation for the three major Jewish feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, the scribes and Pharisees used to have the tombs whitewashed, so that the pilgrims would not be ritually defiled by unknowingly walking over one. Jesus accuses the Pharisees of moral filth, of hiding injustice and immorality inside themselves and of covering the corruption with pretensions of piety and religious fervor. Thus, they contaminate others with their rotten and dangerous ideas of God's demands.

Life messages: 1) The essence of religion is to love God, discovering Him in everyone. The basic principles of the Ten Commandments are respect and reverence based on love of God and neighbor. When we learn to reverence God, His holy Name and His holy Day and to respect our parents, elders and all others, their lives, their goods and their good names, we practice true religion without hypocrisy or selfish interests. True love is sacrificial, encouraging us to help lift the burdens of others

Oct 15 Thursday: St. Teresa of Jesus, Virgin, Doctor of the Church:

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-teresa-of-avila/>; **Oct 13 Thursday:**

Luke 11:47-54 *Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. 48 So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation. 52 Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering." 53 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, 54 lying in wait for him, to catch at something he might say.*

The context: Today's passage, taken from chapter 11 of Luke's Gospel, gives two more accusations which Jesus made against the Pharisees. According to Matthew, Jesus made these accusations on the third day of what we call Holy Week in the Temple precincts of Jerusalem.

1) Jesus criticizes the blatant hypocrisy and false zeal of the scribes and the Pharisees in decorating the old monuments and building new monuments for the past prophets who had been persecuted and murdered by the forefathers of these same Scribes and the Pharisees, while they themselves did not obey the injunctions of these past prophets. Abel's martyrdom is the first recorded in the Bible (Gn 4:8). [[Navarre Bible Commentary](#): "Zechariah was a prophet who died by being stoned in the temple of Jerusalem around the year 800 B.C. because he accused the people of Israel

of being unfaithful to God's law (cf. 2 Chr 24:20-22). The murder of Abel (Gn 4:8) and that of Zechariah were, respectively, the first and last murders reported in these books which the Jews regarded as Sacred Scripture".] Jesus remarks that the blood-guilt inherited by the ancestors of the scribes and the Pharisees throughout the Old Testament era will spill over when the priests (most of them scribes), and the Pharisees conspired to execute Jesus the Messiah.

2) Since the scribes (religious lawyers), were the official interpreters of the Scriptures, they held the "office of the keys." Unfortunately, their interpretation of the Scriptures became so distorted and difficult to understand that others were "shut off" from the Scriptures.

Life message: We need to be men and women of integrity and character without any element of hypocrisy in our Christian life. We should not make a show of holiness and religious fervor when we are not internally holy. Holiness requires humility and giving God credit for any good He does through us.

Oct 16 Friday: St. Hedwig, Religious;

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints/hedwig-598> **St. Margarette**

Mary Alaquoque, Virgin: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-margaret-mary-alacoque/>.

Lk 12:1-7: *1 In the meantime, when so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. 4 "I tell you, my*

friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The context: Jesus continues his condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Scribes and the Pharisees, comparing it to leaven or yeast. The Jews considered yeast as something evil, corrupting the dough during the process of fermentation. That is why the Law given through Moses prescribes unleavened bread for offering to God. Jesus reminded the common people that the Pharisees were hypocrites who pretended to be holy, and that they corrupted people as the yeast corrupts the dough. The teaching and example of the scribes and the Pharisees influenced the crowd in a disastrous way, especially when the teachers failed to practice what they preached. Jesus also warned these religious leaders that their sins would be brought to light at the Last Judgment (CCC #678).

Hearing in secret and announcing in public: According to the *Navarre Bible Commentary*, most Palestinian houses had a roof in the form of a terrace. There people would meet to chat and while away their time in the hottest part of the day. Jesus pointed out to his disciples that in these get-togethers, things said in private became matters of public discussion. In the same way, despite the Pharisees' and scribes' efforts to hide their vices and defects under the veil of piety, all they had hidden would become a matter of common knowledge.

A reverential fear of God: Since nothing -- not even the most insignificant thing -- escapes God, no one should fear that any suffering or persecution he experiences in following Christ will remain unrewarded in eternity. But our fear of God should not be servile (based on fear of punishment). It should be a filial fear (the fear of a child who loves, and so does not want to displease, his or her father), a reverent awe nourished by our trust in Divine Providence.

Life messages: 1) In contrast to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the followers of Jesus must display transparency in their Christian lives by practicing what they profess. 2) They should also maintain a reverential fear of God, adjusting their actions in such a way that they may not displease a loving heavenly Father.

Oct 17 Saturday: St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop, Martyr:

[https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-ignatius-of-](https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-ignatius-of-antioch)

[antioch](https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-ignatius-of-antioch) : **Lk 12:8-12:** 8 "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; 9 but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 11 And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

The context: The scribes and Pharisees attributed Jesus' miracles of driving demons out of possessed people to the work of the devil rather than to God. Pride in their knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and

prejudice against Jesus, the wandering preacher, prompted them to attribute Jesus' exorcisms to the devil's power and Jesus' collaboration with the devil. The first part of today's Gospel is Jesus' reply to their false accusation.

Unpardonable sin: The Jews did not have any idea of a Triune God. For them the Spirit of God was God Himself. It was this Divine Spirit Who spoke through Moses and the prophets and Who enabled men and women to understand the Sacred Scriptures. So, Jesus told the unbelieving Jews that they were refusing to believe in the Spirit of God and in the Messianic prophecies given by Him when they attributed Jesus' miracles to the devil. Hence, theirs was a sin of blasphemy against the Spirit of God. Since they remained unrepentant, thus refusing God's mercy and forgiveness, their sin against the Holy Spirit of God was unforgivable. In the second part of today's Gospel, Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit as a Teacher and an Attorney Who would help defend his disciples when they were brought to trial before the Jewish synagogues and Roman authorities because of their Faith in Jesus as God and Savior.

Life messages: 1) Let us have the generosity and good will not to close our eyes to God or to shut our ears to His voice, thus refusing the chances given us by our merciful God to repent of our sins and renew our lives. 2) Let us ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in our fight against temptations, and let us pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit

FR. ANTONY