

DAILY READINGS, July 21–26, 2025

THE SIXTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

Monday, July 21, 2025

Lectionary: 395

Reading 1: Exodus 14:5–18

Responsorial Psalm: Exodus 15:1bc–2, 3–4, 5–6

Gospel: Matthew: 12:38–42

In the reading from the book of Exodus, the newly freed Hebrews are terrified by the Egyptian army trying to recapture them and place them back into slavery. Despite their initial lack of trust in Him, God heard their pleas for salvation. Moses reassured them by telling them to stand firm and witness the Lord's deliverance. The miraculous parting of the Red Sea followed, allowing the Hebrews to cross on dry land and witness how the returning waters swallowed up Pharaoh's army. This divine providence reinforced their trust in God's protection and guidance.

In the Gospel of Matthew, even though Jesus had performed many signs and miracles, the scribes and the Pharisees refused to believe he was the Messiah. Jesus confronted their unbelief by using the image of Noah to foretell his death and resurrection as the ultimate proof of his identity as the Son of God, which would lead people to repentance and salvation, the ultimate deliverance from sin and death.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to trust in what Jesus gave us and not to be doubtful. Church teaching proclaims what Jesus gave us and His Gospel of Life. So, in this week that our bishops ask us to reflect upon the ethical method of family planning (or Natural Family Planning) and God's design for married love and the gift of life, you are encouraged to learn and trust that these are gifts from God. To learn more consider visiting the bishops' website at usccb.org/nfp.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

May all married couples trust in God's providential care as they seek to embrace His design for life and love in their marriage. We pray to the Lord.

For additional intercessory prayers, see usccb.org/resources/Generic-NFP-Week-Petitions.pdf.

For more information about Church teaching and the methods of Natural Family Planning, see usccb.org/nfp.

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Lectionary: 603

Reading 1: Song of Songs 3:1–4b

Responsorial Psalm: 63:2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9

Gospel: John 20:1–2, 11–18

The most passionate book in the Old Testament is the Song of Songs. The bride seeks the beloved bridegroom and finds the love her heart was seeking.

One of the beautiful aspects of being a Christian is that our relationship with God is not meant to be a matter of the mind but, first and foremost, rooted in our personal and passionate love of Jesus Christ and in His love for us. On this feast of Saint Mary Magdalene, we see how her encounter with Jesus and her corresponding love for Him transformed her. She became a new person in Christ.

This personal relationship is poignantly captured in today's Gospel, when Mary Magdalene does not recognize Christ until He says her name. It was at that moment that her love for Him came alive and led her to proclaim Jesus' resurrection.

Christian marriage is meant to reflect God's love to the world, whereby a man and a woman seeking love and intimacy experience a union of persons. This love leads to an openness to children and creates a family where love abounds.

May we seek to love Jesus more and more so that His love may transform and recreate us to proclaim His love to the world as Mary Magdalene did.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

Let us pray for all couples preparing for marriage, that their marriages will be filled with love and life. We pray to the Lord.

For additional intercessory prayers, see usccb.org/resources/Generic-NFP-Week-Petitions.pdf.

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Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Lectionary: 397

Reading: Exodus 16:1–5, 9–15

Responsorial Psalm: 78:18–19, 23–24, 25–26, 27–28

Gospel: Matthew 13:1–9

In the continuing story from the Book of Exodus, today's reading offers another example of a lack of trust on the part of the Hebrews in God's providence over them as His chosen people. Even though they had been freed from slavery in Egypt and rescued from Pharaoh's army, within a short period, they dream of returning to a life of slavery rather than trusting that God would provide for them on their journey to the promised land. They had given up on God. Once again, God heard their cry and said to Moses that He would rain down bread from heaven, which He did.

Sometimes people do not recognize God's providential care. It's not uncommon to encounter someone who claims that they were Catholic up to some point in their life when something happened. Perhaps it was the loss of a loved one or some other sadness they faced, which made them angry—angry with God—and they stopped attending church, giving up on God, as if God were responsible for forsaking them. How can we understand this? Enter the parable of the sower.

In today's gospel Jesus offers us a simple yet profound truth: God's love for us is constant and unchanging. What is clear from the parable of the sower is that it is our responsibility to receive and accept God's love and allow that love to grow. Our attitude, disposition, and desire all influence how God's love develops within us.

We see in the story of the Exodus that God's love is consistent. Time after time, He demonstrates His providential care. In our own lives, we must strive to be faithful in our love for God. It's like the vows of marriage: at the beginning of a marriage, a man and a woman promise to be faithful to each other in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to remain faithful until death.

May our prayer for each of us be that the love of God sink deeply into our hearts, despite the challenges we face each day, allowing us to bear witness to the love we have received from Him through His son Jesus.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

Let us lift to the Lord married couples seeking the gift of children, that God's grace will bless their openness to life. We pray to the Lord.

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Thursday, July 24, 2025

Lectionary: 398

Reading 1: Exodus 19:1–2, 9–11, 16–20b

Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

Gospel: Matthew 13:10–17

The spiritual experience of the Hebrews at Mount Sinai, described in today's reading, captures the power and majesty of God manifest in fire, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast heralding God's arrival, along with the trembling of the ground. The technical term for this event is a theophany, a dramatic spiritual experience of God's presence, filled with awe and wonder, captured in the responsorial psalm, "Glory and praise forever."

But Jesus, in the Gospel today, offers an entirely different understanding of how God's presence is known. His presence is not revealed in awe-inspiring sights, like those experienced by the Hebrews at Mount Sinai—fire, smoke, earthquakes, or other dramatic displays—but first and foremost through the eyes and ears of faith. As the verse before the Gospel proclaims, "Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the Kingdom."

When we think about experiencing God's presence, we may think that it has to happen in this dramatic way. But the Lord God made each of us so that He could dwell in us. We are made in His image and that means that when we look at each other, we should look for the Lord God. For example, in this week where the bishops in our nation ask us to learn about married love and the gift of life, and Natural Family Planning, we can remember that when spouses look into each other's eyes, they should be able to experience the presence of God. Likewise, when they look at their new-born babies, they can feel and know that God is with them.

May we seek God's presence today in the Word of God, in the "living bread come down from heaven" that we will receive, and in the simple events of this day through which He wishes to gently disclose His presence to us.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

One of the most precious and visible signs of God's presence is in the birth of a child. May God sustain and encourage parents in their vocation as witnesses to God's love. We pray to the Lord.

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Friday, July 25, 2025

Feast of Saint James, Apostle. Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*

Lectionary: 605

Reading 1: 2 Corinthians 4:7–15

Responsorial Psalm: 126:1bc–2ab, 2cd–3, 4–5, 6

Gospel: Matthew 20:20–28

On this Feast Day of St. James, the Apostle and the Anniversary of the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*, we have an opportunity to reflect on: how we are called to be missionary disciples; do our part to proclaim the Gospel of Life; and work to build a culture of life by defending life from conception to natural death. As St. Paul encouraged the Corinthians, “we too believe and therefore speak.”

Humanae vitae remains a prophetic document that urges every Catholic to protect the integrity of conjugal love. The challenge of being a missionary disciple is to be open to serving life in both word and deed, lovingly bringing the Gospel to a world that has lost sight of the sacredness of human life, even the sacredness of the conjugal embrace. It offers spouses wisdom and vision for their marital love by being receptive to new life and creating a nurturing home for children. And this is the papal encyclical that upholds the ethical methods of Natural Family Planning for married couples because they respect God’s design for married love and the gift of life.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

On this anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, we pray that all people may cherish human life, especially the gift of children, who are our hope for the future. We pray to the Lord.

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Saturday, July 26, 2025

Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lectionary: 400

Reading 1: Exodus 24:3–8

Responsorial Psalm: 50:1b–2, 5–6, 14–15

Gospel: Matthew 13:24–30

The reading from the Book of Exodus exemplifies how, by establishing a covenant—a sacred bond—the Lord God forged a personal and permanent relationship with His chosen people. He will be their God, and they will be His people. Christians enter into a covenant with God through the sacrament of baptism, the new covenant instituted by Jesus through shedding His blood on the cross for our salvation. Through this new covenant, we have a relationship with God the Father as His adopted sons and daughters.

On this Feast of Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary, we call to mind that it was their modeling of love and fidelity to God that helped form Mary’s openness to God, to say “yes” to becoming the mother of Jesus. She became the ark of the new covenant that her fiat would make possible, “Let it be done to me according to your will.”

The sacrament of marriage, by definition, is called a covenant, a bond of love and life in which a man and a woman pledge themselves to each other in a permanent union unto death. Spouses vow to be faithful and open to the blessing of children.

As a community of faith, may we support married people in living out their marital covenant of love and life so that they may have the means to offer hope for the world through their families.

Please add the intention below in the Prayers of the Faithful:

Saints Joachim and Ann were models of devotion in their love of God. May all parents model their love of God before their children. Let us pray to the Lord.

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