
PROPER OF SAINTS

		<i>Page</i>
January 25	Paul's Conversion	113
February 2	Presentation	113
February 22	Peter's Chair	113
March 19	Joseph, Husband	114
March 25	Annunciation	114
April 25	Mark	114
May 1	Joseph the Worker	115
May 3	Philip and James	115
May 14	Matthias	115
May 31	Visitation	116
June 11	Barnabas	116
June 24	John's Birth	116
June*	Sacred Heart	117
June 29	Peter and Paul	117
July 3	Thomas	117
July 22	Mary Magdalene	118
July 25	James	118
July 26	Joachim and Ann	118
August 6	Transfiguration	119
August 10	Lawrence	119
August 24	Bartholomew	119
August 28	Augustine	120
August 29	John's Beheading	120
September 8	Mary's Birth	120
September 14	Triumph of Cross	121
September 15	Sorrowful Mother	121
September 21	Matthew	121
September 29	Archangels	122
October 1	Theresa	122
October 2	Guardian Angels	122
October 18	Luke	123
October 28	Simon and Jude	123
November 2	All Souls	123
November 9	John Lateran	124
November 30	Andrew	124

*Friday of the second Sunday after Pentecost.

Jesus missions his disciples

January 25 (Paul's Conversion) Mark 16:15-18

"Go to all people everywhere."

Shortly before returning to his Father, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go forth to all the world.

First, they were to preach the Gospel.
Second, they were to baptize believers into the church, his body on earth.
Third, they were to minister not only to people's bodies but also to their spirits.

To accomplish their mission to the nations, Jesus gave his disciples special powers. These powers would enable them to cope with any obstacle they might meet. Jesus assured them of this by using dramatic and colorful imagery. They had the promise of Jesus himself that nothing would be able to impede the work of the church on earth.

How responsibly are we sharing in the prophetic or teaching ministry of Jesus to which we have been called by baptism?

Jesus said, "I have been given all authority. . . . And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18, 20

Jesus is recognized by Simeon

February 2 (Presentation) Luke 2:22-32

"Lord, you've kept your promise."

An ancient tradition says that a child is never given to parents by God, only lent to them.

This tradition helps us appreciate better the spirit of God's instruction to Moses: "Dedicate all the first-born males to me."

Exodus 13:2

Jews carried out God's instruction with a rite called presentation.

While Jesus was at the Temple for this rite, Simeon identified him as the promised Messiah. Simeon also foretold four things about Jesus.

First, he will meet with opposition.
Second, he will be a vehicle for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel.
Third, he will be a glory to Israel.
Finally, he will be a light to the Gentiles.

Do we see our life as being for our own use, or as belonging to God for his use?

Lord, help us see what you want us to be, and help us become what we see.

Jesus empowers Peter

February 22 (Peter's Chair) Matthew 16:13-19

"I give to you the keys of the kingdom."

Peter's leadership role is unquestioned. His name appears no less than 145 times in the pages of the New Testament—more than all the other apostles combined.

Nowhere is Peter's leadership role clearer than in Matthew's Gospel. There Peter speaks for the others when Jesus is transfigured ^(17:4), pays the tax ^(17:25), discusses the kingdom ^(18:21).

More importantly, Jesus designates Peter the church's foundation ^(16:18), the key-keeper ^(16:19), and the shepherd ^(John 21:17).

It is also Peter to whom Jesus says:

"What you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." Matthew 16:19

How firmly do we accept the teaching authority of Jesus' church?

"Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me." Luke 10:16

Jesus stays behind

March 19 (Joseph, Husband) Luke 2:41-51

"Why did you do this?"

A retreat master
was talking to fathers about their families.
He offered the Holy Family as a model.
He also offered Joseph as a model for fathers.
After the talk a father took issue
with the retreat master, saying:

"There's no way you can compare Joseph
to the average father of a family.
Joseph's wife was sinless,
and his only child was the Son of God."

The retreat master listened patiently
to the objections.
Then he asked the father two questions:

"Was your wife with child
before you came together in marriage?
Did your son ever leave home for three days
and you didn't know where he was?"

To what extent do we tend to think of saints
as people who had no problems like our own?

Lord, help us realize
that no one, not even the holiest people,
is exempt from human problems.

Jesus' birth is announced

March 25 (Annunciation) Luke 1:26-38

"Let it be as you say."

St. Ignatius of Loyola was fond of this reading.
He suggested we contemplate it as follows:

See God the Father looking down from heaven
on the sinful world, before Jesus was born.
Psalm 14 pictures it this way:

"The LORD
looks down from heaven at mankind. . . .
They have all gone wrong. . . .
Not one of them does what is right,
not a single one." Psalm 14:2-3

Next, imagine the thoughts of God the Father,
God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
as they see what is happening in the world.

Finally, contemplate their response.
They decide to send the Son into the world
to try to save it from spiritual destruction.

What are we doing to help Jesus carry out
his mission in the world?

"My soul is glad because of God my Savior,
for he has remembered me,
his lowly servant!" Luke 1:47-48

Jesus missions his disciples

April 25 (Mark) Mark 16:15-20

The Lord worked with them.

The most convincing proof of the resurrection
is the transformation
that took place in Jesus' followers after it.
B. F. Rhein says of them:

"Off they went with burning urgency
to tell the news to all the world.
The Messiah had come.
Truly the Kingdom of God was at hand.
Their lives were led for that end,
and for that end alone.
No amount of persecution could stop them."

The followers of Jesus
enjoyed a new relationship with the risen Lord.
He was able to work with
and through them in a remarkable new way.
They were now his hands, his heart, his tongue.

Can we recall a time
when Jesus worked through us in a special way?

"The holiest moment of the church service
is the moment when God's people—
strengthened by preaching and sacrament—
go out of the church door into the world
to be the church." Ernest Southcott

Jesus was the carpenter's son

May 1 (Joseph the Worker) Matthew 13:54-58

They didn't have faith in Jesus.

A rural schoolteacher in England used to continually remind her small children about the power of Jesus, even over storms.

One day a blizzard struck the countryside. The teacher dismissed class early and led the children through the blinding snow. At times she literally pulled them through the deep drifts.

When it was obvious that she and the children were near exhaustion, a little boy said to her, "We could do with that chap Jesus about now."

The story makes two points. First, we can't expect Jesus to help us if we haven't, first, tried to help ourselves. Second, Jesus can't help us if we don't believe he can.

When we grow tired of work, do we ever recall that Joseph and Jesus did too?

"Work as though everything depended on you; pray as though everything depended on God." Ignatius of Loyola

Jesus instructs his disciples

May 3 (Philip and James) John 14:6-14

"No one goes to the Father except by me."

Time magazine for November 26, 1965, carried a thought-provoking story. It told how 80,000 square miles of northeastern United States and Canada were plunged into darkness by the failure of an electrical fuse about the size of a "bread box."

All the electrical power for that region funneled through that small fuse box.

In his book *The Parables of Peanuts*, Robert Short compares the fuse box to Jesus, who says,

"No one goes to the Father except by me."

Just as the fuse box was the narrow door through which power went forth to northeastern United States and Canada, so Jesus is the narrow door through which we go forth to the Father. (Luke 13:24)

How personally do we relate to Jesus?

"The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to mankind." John 1:4

Jesus talks more about love

May 14 (Matthias) John 15:9-17

"Love one another."

Years ago, during a storm in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a young man played Tarzan for 90 minutes atop the 185-foot-high cross of St. Paul's Catholic Church.

At times the young man swung by one hand from the arm of the cross. Then, as 2,500 people watched, the young man's brother risked his life by climbing out onto the ledge below the cross. While lightning flashed and thunder rolled, he begged his brother to give up his acrobatics and come down.

Finally, after an hour and a half, the young man came down, but not before saying, "Nobody loves me. I'm disillusioned."

How loving are we toward those who need it?

"God created persons to be loved and things to be used. Whenever this order is reversed so that things are loved and people are used, tragedy results." Revel Howe

Mary visits Elizabeth

May 31 (Visitation)

Luke 1:39-56

"The baby within me jumped."

An old man wandered into a church during a Mass for children in a Vacation Bible School. He was shabbily dressed and slightly inebriated. He sat in a pew and appeared to fall asleep.

After the Mass the children sang a hymn to honor Mary, the mother of Jesus. It ended with the words, "Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea, pray for the wanderer, pray for me."

Suddenly the old man began to sob loudly. One of the teachers rushed over to help him. He was too choked to speak, but seemed okay. Later the man said he hadn't heard that hymn since he was a child.

The singing of the hymn to honor Jesus' mother occasioned Jesus' rebirth in the man's heart. Mary continues to be a source of grace to people in our times.

What role does Jesus' mother play in our life?

"Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea, pray for the wanderer, pray for me."

Jesus talks about preaching

June 11 (Barnabas)

Matthew 10:7-13

"Go and preach."

Schoolchildren were cutting across the lawn of an elderly couple, wearing an ugly path in it. At first this only annoyed the couple. But soon annoyance turned into anger. The couple knew something had to be done. The situation was wrecking their peace of mind.

The elderly couple's solution was beautiful. They put crushed gravel on the path, lined it with flowers, and set a bench next to it.

Then on afternoons, when school let out, they sat on the bench and greeted the children.

The children responded wonderfully. They thanked the couple for the path and sat and chatted with them.

Maybe we can't preach the gospel by word as Barnabas did, but we can preach it by example, as the elderly couple did.

How do we handle situations that threaten to destroy our peace of mind?

Lord, help us deal with ugly situations in a beautiful way.

Birth of John the Baptist

June 24 (John's Birth)

Luke 1:57-66, 80

The child grew and developed.

Joel Weldon, an expert on human potential, likes to tell about the Chinese bamboo tree. This unusual plant takes five years to emerge from the soil. All during these five years, however, it has to be watered and fertilized. Once the plant emerges, it skyrockets to a height of 90 feet in six short weeks.

The plant's rapid growth is made possible by the elaborate root system that developed during its five years of germination.

John the Baptist, like Jesus, spent 30 years preparing for his ministry. It was the most important time of his life. For during this time he was putting down the elaborate spiritual root system that made possible his fruitful ministry in later life.

What kind of spiritual roots are we growing?

Lord, help us spend time each day watering and fertilizing our spiritual system with prayer.

Jesus' side is pierced

June* (Sacred Heart) Matthew 11:25-30

"I am gentle and humble in spirit."

A little boy had just gotten his own room.
During his first night in it alone,
a violent thunderstorm broke out.
The boy started screaming,
"Daddy! Come quick! I'm scared!"

"Don't worry, Bobby!" his father called out,
"God loves you! He'll protect you."
The boy yelled back,
"I know God loves me and will protect me.
But right now I need somebody with skin on."

That's what the Feast of the Sacred Heart
is all about.

It's God coming among us with skin on.
It's God revealing himself as one of us.

Jesus grows tired. (John 4:6)

Jesus cries. (John 11:35)

Jesus dies in pain on a cross.

What image of Jesus do we have in mind
when we pray to him?

"Nay, Jesus was not a phantom,
nor a conception of poets.
He was a man like yourself and myself."

Kahlil Gibran, *Jesus the Son of God*

Peter professes faith in Jesus

June 29 (Peter and Paul) Matthew 16:13-19

"Who do you say I am?"

Two small boys were watching a scorpion.
One boy said, "A scorpion stung me once."
His friend said, "Really! How bad did it hurt?"

The other boy thought for a minute.
Then he pinched his arm
until it hurt the way he remembered the sting.
Next he turned to his friend
and pinched his arm the same amount.

*Friday of the second Sunday after Pentecost.

His friend said, "That wasn't so bad."
The other boy shrugged and said,
"Well, I can't feel a sting for you,
but that's about how much it hurt me."

There are some things we can't do for another.
We can't feel a sting for them.
We can't view a sunset for them.
We can't profess faith in Jesus for them.

How do we answer Jesus' question,
"Who do you say I am?" Why this answer?

To seek Jesus is our greatest adventure;
to find him, our greatest human achievement.

Thomas professes faith in Jesus

July 3 (Thomas) John 20:24-29

"Stop doubting, and believe!"

John Updike
wrote a short story called "Pigeon Feathers."
It's about a young boy, David,
who begins to have doubts about his faith.

One night
David is lying in bed thinking about his problem.
He decides upon a bold experiment.
He lifts his hands above his head
and asks Jesus to touch them.

As David waits, he thinks he feels
the touch of Jesus; but he's not sure.
David puts his hands back under the covers,
not sure if Jesus touched him or not.

Like little David, and like Thomas the Apostle,
from time to time
we all crave some assurance of our faith.
In the end, however, faith is loving trust.
It is saying to Jesus, "I trust you."

How do we handle faith difficulties
when they arise?

"I do have faith, but not enough.
Help me have more!" Mark 9:24

Jesus appears to Magdalene

July 22 (Mary Magdalene) John 20:1-2,
11-18

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.

The name *Magdalene* means “from Magdala,”
a village on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.
Mary Magdalene is the woman
out of whom Jesus drove seven demons.

(Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2)

This Mary was present
at the crucifixion of Jesus. (Mark 15:40)
She was also present at his burial. (Mark 15:47)

Some think she’s the sinful woman who anointed
Jesus’ feet at Simon’s house. (Luke 7:36-50)

But this is only speculation.

Likewise, some think she was the sister
of Martha and Lazarus. (John 11:1, 12:3)

But again, this is only speculation.

This much is certain.
She is someone who loved Jesus deeply.
In the final analysis this is all that matters.

How do we show our own love for Jesus?

“Mature love says,
‘I need you because I love you.’
Immature love says,
‘I love you because I need you.’” Erich Fromm

Jesus speaks about his death

July 25 (James) Matthew 20:20-28

“Can you drink of this cup?”

William Barclay says
there’s an unusual old Roman coin
that shows an ox looking at an altar and a plow.
Below the ox are written the words
“ready for either.”

The Roman ox was not only a beast of burden
but also a beast of sacrifice.
It had to be ready for either a short life,
ending in bloodshed,
or a long, hard life, pulling a plow.

The early Christians were a lot like the ox.
They too had to be ready
for either a short life, ending in martyrdom,
or a long, hard life, witnessing to Jesus.

To “drink from the cup” of Jesus
meant to be willing to accept either life.

What kind of witness are we bearing to Jesus
right now in our lives?

“Proclaim the wonderful acts of God,
who called you out of darkness
into his own marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Jesus speaks about a great blessing

July 26 (Joachim and Ann) Matthew 13:16-17

“They longed to see what you see.”

The French painter Vincent Van Gogh
produced 1,700 paintings and drawings
before he died in 1890.
He sold only one of them—for \$85.
Van Gogh died, believing he was a failure.

Yet, recently, one of his paintings
sold for \$1 million.
Van Gogh never knew what a great artist
he really was.

What is true of Van Gogh
is true, also, of Saints Joachim and Ann,
the parents of Mary
and the grandparents of Jesus.
They had no idea how great they were.
They probably never even lived long enough
to know exactly who their grandson was.

To what extent do we look upon our own lives
as a success or a failure?

Lord, help us realize
that it’s not what we think about our lives
that is important.
Rather, it’s what you think about them.

Jesus is transfigured

August 6 (Transfiguration) Matthew 17:1-9

“This is my Son, listen to him!”

A *Peanuts* cartoon shows Schroeder holding a record of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony.

“What are you going to do with it?” asks Lucy.

“Listen to it,” says Schroeder.

“You mean dance to it?” asks Lucy.

“No, just listen to it,” says Schroeder.

“You mean sing along with it?” asks Lucy.

“No, just listen to it,” says Schroeder.

“That’s the dumbest thing I ever heard of,” says Lucy.

We often find it hard to listen to something, even the word of God.

We feel we have to be doing something.

But the voice from the cloud didn’t say,

“This is my Son, love him”

or “This is my Son, reach out to him”

or “This is my Son, bow down and worship him.”

It said, “This is my Son, listen to him!”

How open are we to God’s word when it is proclaimed in worship?

Lord, help us realize

that you are more ready to reveal your heart to us than we are to open our hearts to you.

Jesus talks about discipleship

August 10 (Lawrence) John 12:24-26

“My Father will honor anyone who serves me.”

The film *Chariots of Fire* is about Eric Liddell, England’s top 100-meter runner and a cinch to win the gold in the 1924 Paris Olympics. Deeply religious, Eric never ran on Sunday.

When the Olympic schedule was released, Eric was shocked.

The 100-meter event was scheduled for Sunday. In spite of incredible pressure put upon him

by the British press, Eric refused to compete. He switched to the 400-meter race, a race he had never run in his life.

Just before the race, the American runner, Jackson Scholz, handed Eric a note.

It contained this sentence from today’s reading: “My Father will honor anyone who serves me.”

Seconds later, Eric won the 400-meter event.

Still clutched in his hand was the note Jackson Scholz had given him.

How loyal are we in serving Jesus?

“Those who trust in the LORD . . . will run and not get weary.” Isaiah 40:31

Jesus calls Bartholomew

August 24 (Bartholomew) John 1:45-51

“Teacher, you are the Son of God!”

Scripture scholar Stephen Doyle proposes this imaginary situation.

Suppose a teacher came into class the first day and said to his students, “I am your teacher.

From now on you will put me before your father, your mother, even yourself.

You must be ready to follow me without pay, without food, and without shelter.

No ifs, ands, or buts. Follow me.”

No teacher has a right to demand control over his students’ lives.

That’s why we miss the point if we think of Jesus only as a teacher.

Nathanael (Bartholomew) was right.

Jesus is not just a teacher; he is much more.

He is the Son of God.

What does Jesus mean to us, personally?

Lord Jesus, you are

food when we are hungry,

drink when we are thirsty,

and a path in the forest when we are lost.

Jesus talks about service

August 28 (Augustine) Matthew 23:8-12

“Those who serve are the greatest.”

Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is a former assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago. She has interviewed hundreds of men and women who were declared clinically dead and then revived.

Consistently these people report that they experienced a kind of instant replay of their lives.

It was like seeing a rapid-fire movie of everything they ever said or did.

“When you come to this point,” says Dr. Kubler-Ross, “you see there are only two things that are relevant: the service you rendered to others, and love. All those things we think are important, like fame, money, prestige, and power, are insignificant.”

How much service and love are in our life?

“Help row the other’s boat across, and lo! thine own has reached the shore.” Hindu proverb

The Baptist is executed

August 29 (John’s Beheading) Mark 6:17-29

John’s words moved Herod.

John Boswell was an 18th-century lawyer and biographer. In his *London Diary*, he tells how he once sat in church enjoying the service. But seconds later he found himself laying plans to commit a serious sin.

We human beings are a bundle of contradictions at times. This is further illustrated in today’s reading. Mark tells us, “Herod liked to listen to John,

even though he became greatly disturbed every time he heard him.”

The tug-of-war within our hearts is evidence that there’s a bit of the saint and a bit of the sinner in all of us. We have, as it were, one foot in heaven and one foot on earth.

How do we handle temptation when it comes?

Lord, help us keep in mind this warning: “Unless there is within us that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us.” Peter Forsyth

Jesus’ ancestors are listed

September 8 (Mary’s Birth) Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Jesus was born of Mary.

Geraldine Marshall writes that one of her favorite birthday memories is *not* one of her own, but one of her dad’s.

One day in her childhood her dad gave her a beautiful stuffed tiger. She jumped up and down for joy. But then she stopped and said, “But, Daddy, it’s *your* birthday, not mine. Why are you giving me a birthday present? I should give you one.”

Her dad replied, “You have given me a gift. It’s seeing you so happy.”

Geraldine still has that stuffed tiger. But the most precious gift her father gave her that day was an insight into the joy of giving.

What is our own favorite memory of a birthday?

“The Lord Jesus himself said, ‘There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.’” Acts 20:35

Jesus talks about his crucifixion

September 14 John 3:13-17
(Triumph of Cross)

“The Son of Man must be lifted up.”

There’s a retreat house at Barrington, Illinois.
The grounds surrounding it are filled with trees.

Somewhere among the trees is a stone cross.
It is especially striking at night
because of the way it has been lighted.
On rainy nights it is even more striking
because water trickles down
the face and body of Jesus.

One night a retreatant came upon the cross.
The light shining on the stone
and the water trickling down the body of Jesus
moved the retreatant deeply.
He walked up to the cross
and touched the side of it reverently.
Later he said, “I wasn’t worthy enough
to touch the body of Jesus.”

How reverently do we regard the cross?

“Lord, by your cross and resurrection,
you have set us free.
You are the Savior of the world.”

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Jesus gives John his mother

September 15 John 19:25-27
(Sorrowful Mother)

Near the cross of Jesus stood Mary.

American servicemen came home
from the Pacific with all kinds of souvenirs.
Cyril O’Brien treasures one, especially.
It is a small holy picture of Our Lady.

One day, on the island of Guam,
his patrol encountered three Japanese soldiers.
A volley of gunfire followed.

Routinely, the patrol checked the dead soldiers
for grenades and possible intelligence material.

O’Brien put his hand
into the pocket of one of the Japanese soldiers.
It contained a picture of Mary.
It was the pocket over the soldier’s heart.

What are some of the modern sorrows of Mary?

“At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.

“Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
All his bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had passed.” Stabat Mater

Jesus calls Matthew

September 21 (Matthew) Matthew 9:9-13

“I came to call outcasts.”

A window washer
who washed only clean windows would be a fool.
A relief agency that helped only the wealthy
would be a laugh.
A hospital that admitted only the healthy
would be a joke.

This is the point Jesus makes in today’s reading.
He came to call outcasts and sinners.

Why should people be surprised
to find him working with outcasts and sinners?

The fact that some Pharisees were surprised
shows how far they had drifted
from exercising true leadership in Israel.

Like Jesus, we should show special concern
for outcasts and alienated people in our time.

Who are some of the outcasts and alienated
people in our time? How can we help them?

“We must learn to live together as brothers
or perish together as fools.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jesus makes a promise to Nathanael

September 29 (Archangels) John 1:47-51

"You will see angels rising and descending."

The word *angel* means "messenger."
The Bible portrays angels
as being God's messengers to his people.
Ancient artists depicted angels as having wings.
But you can no more depict an angel
than you can the wind.

The Letter to the Hebrews says:
"What are angels, then?
They are spirits who serve God
and are sent by him to help those
who are to receive salvation." Hebrews 1:4

It was an angel who told Mary
she was to be the mother of Jesus.
It was an angel who told Joseph
Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit.
It was an angel who told Joseph
to flee to Egypt with Jesus and Mary.

How deeply do we believe in God's personal
concern for us,
as manifested by angels in biblical times?

Lord, help us experience your concern for us,
as Jesus experienced it in his own lifetime.

Jesus talks about greatness

October 1 (Theresa) Matthew 18:1-4

"You must become as children."

Novelist John Updike says
that if we don't keep in touch with children,
we will stop being human and become machines
for eating and for making money.
Above all, however,
children speak to us about our heavenly Father.

A child's trust speaks to us about the trust
we should have in our heavenly Father.

A child's wide-eyed wonder at the world
speaks to us about the wonder we should have
for our Father's universe.

Finally, a child's warm response to our love
speaks about the response we should make
to our Father's love toward us.

Do we trust our Father?
Do we respond to our Father's love
as warmly as a child responds to our love?

"Backward, turn backward,
O Time, in thy flight;
Make me a child again,
Just for tonight." Elizabeth Chase, "Rock Me to Sleep"

Jesus talks about children

October 2 Matthew 18:1-5, 10
(Guardian Angels)

"Their angels see my Father's face."

In his book *The God Who Fell from Heaven*,
John Shea says his second-grade teacher
had the kids slide over in their seats
to make room for their guardian angels.

John happened to be a fat child
and "oozed over the edge" of his seat
"like a melted cheese sandwich."
He regrets that he outgrew his angel.

Fr. Shea says
that if he could tell a child only one thing,
he would tell him that he has a personal angel,
"like Tobit had on his mission of manhood."
Otherwise the child might forget
that God has a personal, loving providence
for each one of his children.

Today's feast reminds us of the special,
loving providence God has for each of us.

How do we experience God's providence
in our own personal lives?

"God will put his angels in charge of you
to protect you wherever you go." Psalm 91:11

Jesus sends out disciples

October 18 (Luke) Luke 10:1-9

He sent them in pairs.

Luke and Paul traveled together on certain occasions. Paul tells us that Luke was a Gentile by birth and a doctor by profession. (Colossians 4:11-14) Luke's background may account for his special concern for the "have-nots" of ancient society: the poor, outcasts, and women.

Luke's portrait of Jesus is that of a loving person deeply concerned about the world's neglected citizens. Luke's Jesus would rejoice at these words written at the base of the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. . . .
Send these,
the homeless, tempest-tost to me."

How responsive are we to the needs of society's neglected citizens?

Lord, help the peoples of the world realize that trying to build a family of man without the fatherhood of God is like trying to build a wheel without a hub.

Jesus chooses his apostles

October 28 (Simon and Jude) Luke 6:12-16

First, Jesus prayed for guidance.

Every important event in Jesus' life found him at prayer.

Jesus prayed at his baptism. (Luke 3:21)
He prayed at the start of his ministry. (Mark 1:35)
He prayed before picking the twelve. (Luke 6:12)

He prayed before asking his disciples the question, "Who do you say I am?" (Luke 9:18)
He prayed before going to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:29)

He prayed in the garden. (Luke 22:41)
He prayed on the cross. (Luke 23:34)
He prayed before teaching his own disciples how to pray. (Luke 11:1)

What role does prayer play in the important events in our life?

"Prayer is like the turning on of an electric switch. It does not create the current; it simply provides the channel through which the electric current may flow."
Max Handel

Jesus talks about "his hour"

November 2 (All Souls) John 12:23-28

"The seed must die."

A little boy told his kindergarten teacher, "My sister's really dead! They put her in the ground and covered her up!"

The teacher put her arm around the boy and took him to a planter box by a window. There the class had planted seeds earlier. Using her finger, she scraped the dirt and found one of the seeds. Pointing to the green sprout emerging from the seed, the teacher said:

"See, Bobbie, the seed is not dying. It is only changing its way of living. God never intended the seed to remain a seed. He intended it to become a plant. It's the same way with your sister. She is now changing her way of living. God made her for something much more than just life in this world."

How strong is our faith in life after death?

Lord, help us understand that death and love are two wings by which we mount to heaven.

Jesus teaches the Samaritans

November 9 (John Lateran)

John 4:19-24

"God is Spirit."

Samaritans accept only the first five books of the Bible. Their view and worship of God, therefore, is truncated. Jewish rabbis charged that Samaritan worship was based more on ignorance and fear than on knowledge and love. Be that as it may, people's notions of God do influence their worship of God.

People's notions of God became so distorted in the course of history that God had to come and tell us who he was. "Whoever has seen me," said Jesus, "has seen the Father." John 14:9

Without Jesus our notions of God are clouded in bewilderment and darkness.

How do we picture God when we worship?

"As the print of the seal on wax is the expressed image of the seal itself, so Christ is the expressed image—the perfect representation of God." St. Ambrose, fourth century

The four men in today's reading probably shuddered at the responsibility also. But they didn't let this stop them.

How do we respond to the thought of following Jesus more perfectly than we are doing now?

When the Lord said, "Whom shall I send?" the prophet Isaiah answered, "I will go! Send me!" Isaiah 6:8

Jesus calls four disciples

November 30 (Andrew)

Matthew 4:18-22

"Follow me!"

Abraham Maslow was a great psychologist who taught at Brandeis University.

Maslow had an interesting response to the question of why so few people today respond to the call to "leave all" and become modern-day apostles. He says we are afraid to become what we know we could if we just put our mind to it. We thrill at the possibility, but we also shudder at the responsibility.