

Daily Bread November 2018

Thursday, November 1, 2018 ~ Rv 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12a

All Saints

Paige Byrne Shortal

I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. John's vision, as described in the Book of Revelation, reminds me of Flannery O'Connor's short story, "Revelation." Mrs. Turpin, who prides herself on her own propriety, has an unwelcome vision of all the folks she has deemed less than herself heading toward heaven, and not in the stately manner she imagines such an entrance deserves, but "shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs." Amazing how we think we are so different from others. And yet if one compares that imagined difference to the difference between me and God ... well then, no human is all that different from another. Not a bad thing to remember as we gaze around at our fellow saints. We may as well get used to each other — hopefully we will have eternity together. *Holy God, I want to say, "Make me a saint," but that's a bit scary; so instead I pray, "please make me want to be a saint."*

Friday, November 2, 2018 ~ Wis 3:1-9; Rom 5:5-11 or Rom 6:3-9; Mt 25:31:46

All Souls

Paige Byrne Shortal

What you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me. In a talk I heard more than a decade ago, John Carr, then executive director for the U.S. Bishops' Office of Justice, Peace and Human Development, said that Matthew 25 is the only place in the Gospels where we are told what we need to do to get to heaven. His assertion stuck with me. Even if it is exaggerated a bit, one can't deny that Jesus seems very clear about this message. Jesus identifies with those who are in need and judges those who could meet the need. Perhaps there were implied exclusions, but I honestly can't find them. Nothing about the needy being one of our own or worthy or "legal." It is something to think about on this All Souls Day. What life will bring us a sense of satisfaction as we prepare to cross the great divide? *Generous God, show me the way to be a person for others.*

Sunday, November 4, 2018 ~ Daily Bread for November 4, 2018

Mark Bartholomew



"There is no other commandment greater than these." - *Mark 12:31*

Daily Bread November 2018

Monday, November 5, 2018 ~ Phil 2:1-4; Lk 14:12-14

Paige Byrne Shortal

When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

You may not be throwing any banquets in the near future, but I am guessing you might find yourself at your congregation's coffee and doughnuts or a community soup night or fish fry or festival. I've been to dozens and at every single event there is always at least one person sitting alone. Sometimes, I ask if I might sit with them and invite others to join us and it works out okay. I have met some really delightful people by doing that. Also a few odd ones, but at least they were interesting. But here's the thing ... I don't always do it and it haunts me later. Why didn't I greet that lonely looking person or that obviously homeless person? What was so important that I would let someone sit alone and not welcome them?

Jesus, Lord and brother, remind me to look for your face in each person I meet this day.

Tuesday, November 6, 2018 Phil 2:5-11; Lk 14:15-24

Paige Byrne Shortal

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

The Philippian's Christ hymn is among my favorite Bible passages. My friend Peter set it to music, building to the last line, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" We sing it every Palm Sunday as the second reading, allowing that repeated phrase, which grows and grows in harmony and volume, to serve as the Gospel acclamation before the Passion is read. This hymn celebrates the irony that is Jesus — the crucified Lord. We worship one who eschewed the trappings of someone who is worshipped. And because we like trappings — I love trappings! — we gave them to him anyway. The trappings acknowledge the Lord part, the "seated-at-the-right-hand-of God" part. But amidst the trappings, we must remember feet — his dusty ones as he walked along with his disciples and the feet he washed as he commanded us to do. Crucified and Lord. Human and divine. It's our calling, too. *My crucified Lord, give me the grace to believe what I sing and live what I believe.*

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 ~ Phil 2:12-18; Lk 14:25-33

Paige Byrne Shortal

... so that my boast for the day of Christ may be that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

In our local nursing home, on the door of each resident, are photos from their lives — perhaps a wedding picture, family portrait or travel photos of when they were young and beautiful. These photos remind the attendants and visitors that there is a whole life within each one of these now-frail people. Each one had hopes and dreams and desires to be remembered for something. Even St. Paul is concerned about leaving a legacy. We don't want to devote our lives to something or someone and find out, in the end, that our efforts bore no fruit. We all hope to be remembered. We all hope to be acknowledged for everything we were and are. We all hope to be in the company of someone who loves us when it is our time to leave this Earth.

Jesus, blessed One, give us the grace to choose wisely and love always as we make our way through this life.

Daily Bread November 2018

Thursday, November 8, 2018 ~ Phil 3:3-8a; Lk 15:1-10

Miguel Dulick

This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!

The Pharisees are so annoying! They pick at everything Jesus does. But Jesus does not compromise; his theme is love as far as the eye can see. Two parables today — the lost sheep found by a man, the lost coin found by a woman — are the run-up to the greatest of all the parables, the prodigal son. And so, tiny events stir glory in the heavens, with joy and celebration when “one sinner repents.” I would love my vision to be so sharp as to spot the lost lamb on the farthest hill, the lost coin in the darkest corner of the house. Right now, there are families un-planning their Thanksgiving dinner because they will not eat with “sinners.” Our response? Go ahead and stick by your principles. Who cares if the heavens cry?

Our hearts rejoice who search for you, O Lord!

Friday, November 9, 2018 ~ Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17; Jn 2:13-22

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Miguel Dulick

Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!

Today's feast is a big deal! The Basilica of St. John Lateran — the bishop of Rome's own church — is celebrated with three big readings, and as solemnly as any Sunday. We never tire of saying, “The church is not the building. It is the people.” Absolutely! But Jesus loves the Temple enough to whip out the people who treated it with disrespect. Where I live I love to climb the hill to our church in my little town in Honduras. There, I place a candle on the tile and pray a while, begging mercy for myself and blessings for my benefactors. There is the Santísimo, the Blessed Sacrament, a presence overflowing with love like Ezekiel's vision of the waters, lighting us up with the Spirit that St. Paul sees within each of us. Other folks visit, too — their silent devotion carrying my heart to ever deeper peace.

God, you are in our midst, our refuge and our strength!

Saturday, November 10, 2018 ~ Phil 4:10-19; Lk 16:9-15

St. Leo the Great, pope and doctor of the church

Miguel Dulick

What is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God.

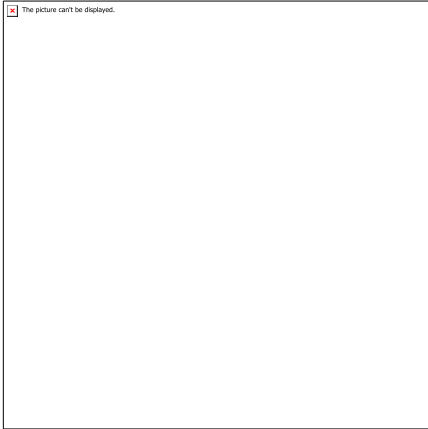
Jesus is not politically correct. “Make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth.” What kind of advice is this! It is even worse in the original: The translators' lame attempt to keep Jesus within bounds should be “with unrighteous mammon,” which suggests a sacrilege, since mammon is a pagan god! But it is not the dirt, it is the handler that determines who is clean. I may put myself in some “safe place,” where I don't have to deal with any offense. Jesus throws us into the fray: “If you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?” If I don't get my hands dirty, if I don't love the enemy, I can't serve God. My conditional “friending” is an abomination to God.

O Lord, you keep the just one in everlasting remembrance!

Daily Bread November 2018

Sunday, November 11, 2018 ~ Daily Bread for November 11, 2018

Mark Bartholomew



"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury." - *Mark 12:43*

Monday, November 12, 2018 ~ Ti 1:1-9; Lk 17:1-6

St. Josaphat, bishop and martyr

Mary Joshi

Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the one through whom they occur.

Paul lays out a tough behavior standard required of anyone who would be appointed bishop of a faith community; a standard that even extends to their children. Jesus, as well, tells his disciples that temptations to stray from God's teachings abound. He gives a stern warning to any with the power to influence others. They will be held to a greater degree of accountability if they abuse their authority to lead others to act in ways that counter God's teachings. Do our civil and church leaders promote policies and practices that embrace the poor, feed the hungry, welcome the stranger or release those bound by injustice? Do we support those that do?

Increase our faith Lord, and strengthen our will for justice and mercy.

Tuesday, November 13, 2018 ~ Ti 2:1-8, 11-14; Lk 17:7-10

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, religious

Mary Joshi

We have done what we were obliged to do.

I was recently invited to a puja (a Hindu prayer ritual) in honor of a newlywed couple. Although much of the Scripture and prayers were spoken in an unfamiliar language, written translations were offered to help us follow along. I smiled when I read one familiar-sounding quote paraphrased from the Bhagavad Gita. "Your right (duty) is to work, but never to the fruit thereof. Let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment be to inaction" (BG 2:47). Jesus tells a similar message in today's Gospel, that the work of God's kingdom is to serve one another, not so that we may be praised by God or others or to earn heavenly brownie points, but because it is the most basic job description of all who wish to follow Christ. The work may at times be difficult or make us uncomfortable, but "inaction" is not an option. It is our response to being loved unconditionally as a beloved child of God.

Form us, O God, so we may reject worldly desires and sustain us in our efforts to serve one another.

Daily Bread November 2018

Wednesday, November 14, 2018 ~ Ti 3:1-7; Lk 17:11-19

Mary Joshi

Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.

Would Jesus ever tell me, “Your faith has saved you.” What does it even mean to be a person of faith? If faith is simply believing in God and God’s power, then all ten lepers had faith. If faith is obeying God’s commands then again, all ten had faith for they followed his command to show themselves to the priest. What did the Samaritan leper do to merit Jesus’ special praise? He returned to Jesus and acknowledging the source of his healing, he knelt before Jesus in humility and gratitude for his newfound health and strength. Faith is not a thing or a belief to be achieved, but an action that is lived. It is trusting whole-heartedly that God loves us and wants to make us whole. It is living everyday with generosity and gratitude for the gift of God’s mercy and love. For most of us, it is a lifelong work in progress.

May goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life.

Thursday, November 15, 2018 ~ Phlm 7-20; Lk 17:20-25

Mary Joshi

Behold, the kingdom of God is among you.

For weeks after searching the internet for uses and health benefits of some unusual herbs, I had been gifted for my garden, my screen was filled with advertisements for “natural” products that promised to quickly cure every problem imaginable. We live in a world that seems to demand quick fixes at our fingertips, allowing for little patience or time to think through any long-term consequences of those quick fixes. Jesus reminds us today that the kingdom isn’t out there somewhere or available in “24 hours or less.” It is within our midst but requires patient work and committed perseverance through many ups and downs. Paul reminds us of the importance of supporting one another in love and prayer, so that we may continually “refresh” our desire and commitment to do God’s will.

Refresh our hearts and our fervor, O Lord, that we may become effective workers for your kingdom.

Friday, November 16, 2018 ~ 2 Jn 4-9; Lk 17:26-37

Mary Joshi

Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it.

Our culture spends much energy on protecting ourselves from those we are convinced wish us harm, or at least, are plotting to take our “stuff.” Most often, however, it’s the loss of relationships, not stuff, that devastates us most. Anyone who has suffered loss through illness, accident or myriads of other life-altering tragedies knows there was little they could have done to prevent it. They often credit the compassion and generosity of others, even strangers, for helping them recover. It is the paradox of Jesus’ message that the more we try to isolate ourselves from difficulties, the more unprepared we are for life’s inevitable tragedies. Those whose lives are focused on compassion and the building up of relationships discover that the burdens of tragedy are lightened by those who have given of themselves.

When we fear the world’s darkness, Lord, give us the courage to reach out to others in love and hope.

Daily Bread November 2018

Saturday, November 17, 2018 ~ 3 Jn 5-8; Lk 18:1-8

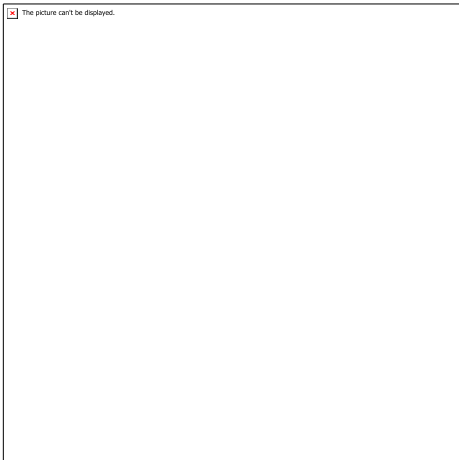
St. Elizabeth of Hungary, religious

Mary Joshi

When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Our baptism calls us all to become the body of Christ for the world; to become his voice of mercy, his hands of justice and his heart of compassion. In a world that seems to becoming more fear-filled and self-protecting, our baptismal mandate to love can feel like an overwhelming task. We may want to give up amidst thoughts of: “What difference can I make? Things will never change. What’s the use?” Like the pesky widow of today’s Gospel, Jesus encourages us to be persistent, to push past our pessimism and weariness, and keep working in his name. God will never abandon his people nor fail to care for them, even though many may have abandoned God. *Your light shines through the darkness for the upright, O Lord. Your steadfast love endures forever.*

Sunday, November 18, 2018 ~ Daily Bread for November 18, 2018

Mark Bartholomew



"Learn a lesson from the fig tree." - *Mark 13:28*

Monday, November 19, 2018 ~ Rv 1:1-4; 2:1-5; Lk 18:35-43

Miguel Dulick

To the seven churches in Asia: grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come. The Book of Revelation is all in sevens, beginning with these seven little encyclicals that prompt the teacher in me to suggest an assignment: Write your own letter to your local church. Here’s mine to my little village in Honduras. “I know your struggles, a poverty of means and meaning in a society heavy with corruption and violence. But I have this against you, that you sometimes forget your gifts. So celebrate your common faith, whether ‘Catholic’ or ‘evangelical,’ whose roots stretch back to the days of the great missionary Father José Manuel Subirana.” And I might add what the Lord says to the church in Ephesus: “Repent, and do the works you did at first.” The message, of course, is first of all for myself!
O Lord, may I be like a tree planted near running water, whose leaves never fade!

Daily Bread November 2018

Tuesday, November 20, 2018 ~ Rv 3:1-6, 14-22; Lk 19:1-10

Miguel Dulick

Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

Folks who never saw “Hamlet” know the line, “To be or not to be.” So I like to think that I could adapt the line, “To open or not to open,” while viewing the famous painting by William Holman Hunt of Jesus standing at a door without a knob — because it only opens from inside. Also familiar is the graphic warning: “I wish you were either cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth!” ‘Spit’ being the gentle translation of the original. Anyway, such is the Church of Laodicea. Sound familiar? Nevertheless, Jesus’ promise is a consolation ultimately fulfilled in Communion. “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.”

Lord, make me one who walks blamelessly and does justice, who thinks truth in my heart!

Wednesday, November 21, 2018 ~ Rv 4:1-11; Lk 19:11-28

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Miguel Dulick

I, John, had a vision of an open door to heaven!

I love this image! I guess you could say Jesus came out that door, to Earth and now it’s our turn. “Come up here!” says a “trumpet-like voice.” Could there be a better invitation to tomorrow’s celebration of Thanksgiving? “Seven flaming torches” for decoration, and “four living creatures,” with faces like a lion, a calf, a man, an eagle in flight — think of your relatives gathered at the festive table! The Book of Revelation may not be as scary or as hard to interpret as we may think. Ultimately, it is a liturgy, an ecstatic Mass. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.” No wonder Handel cried in rapture when he finished “Messiah.”

Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord!

Thursday, November 22, 2018 ~ Rv 5:1-10; Lk 19:41-44

St. Cecilia, religious and martyr

Miguel Dulick

Where are the other nine?

Let’s not blame the ungrateful lepers, when our own gratitude is often so grudging. My mother taught us kids: “Please” and “Thank you.” And when she spent the last 20 years of her life in a wheelchair, she said, “Thank you” for even the tiniest attention. In Spanish, every gift or kindness is a blessing, for the giver and the receiver. “Gracias” in English is simply “graces” enough to go around for everyone! Thanksgiving is not a big “church” day like Christmas and Easter, but nothing is more “gracias” than the Eucharist. It makes a good start to the day, not to mention a good centering for the wars in the shopping malls.

Every day will I bless you, O God, and I will praise your name forever!

Daily Bread November 2018

Friday, November 23, 2018 ~ Rv 10:8-11; Lk 19:45-48

Miguel Dulick

You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

Revelation always takes the long view, which might come in handy on “Black Friday,” when shoppers fight for bargains. Speaking of crowds, today’s date is host to three very different saints. Clement I was the third successor to Peter as bishop of Rome, but he was close enough to the apostles to almost qualify for inclusion in the Christian Scriptures with his own Letter to the Corinthians. Columban was an early Irish monk, creating the monastic life as a worthy option for Catholic holiness. Always a little special for me, since a Sister Columban taught me in grade school. And Blessed Miguel Pro, who brings us up to the 20th century, was martyred in Mexico when his secret priesthood was discovered, a shock to anyone who assumed that Mexico was “a Catholic country.” His last words were, “Viva Cristo Rey!” perfect for this Sunday’s feast of Christ the King.

How sweet to my palate are your promises, O Lord, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Saturday, November 24, 2018 ~ Rv 11:4-12; Lk 20:27-40

St. Andrew Dũng-Lạc, priest, and companions, martyrs

Miguel Dulick

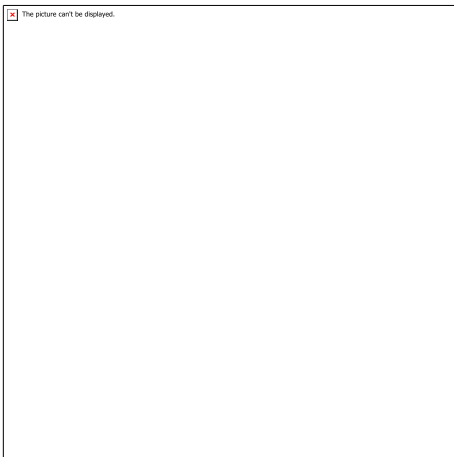
Here are my two witnesses: They are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord.

Pardon me if I wade into exegetical controversy to say that the “two witnesses” have to be Peter and Paul. Who else would leave the church so devastated by their martyrdom, so inspired by their promised resurrection? Did I say two witnesses? How about 117? Ninety-six native Vietnamese and 21 missionaries throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Fr. Andrew Dũng-Lạc being the best known, were all crowned with martyrdom in a drama at least equal to the persecutions of Revelation. Not exactly “a Christmas story,” but something to remind us of “the reason for the season.”

O God, I will sing a new song to you; with a ten-stringed lyre I will chant your praise!

Sunday, November 25, 2018 ~ Daily Bread for November 25, 2018

Mark Bartholomew



"Then you are a king?" - John 18:37

Daily Bread November 2018

Monday, November 26, 2018 ~ Rv 14:1-3, 4b-5; Lk 21:1-4

Patricia Russell

...and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. Jesus sits down and observes the contributions of all those gathered in the Temple. The wealthy come forward first, dramatically offering large monetary contributions. While absent from Luke's narrative, Mark emphasizes the fanfare — often literally marked with a trumpet blast — as the rich throw significant amounts of money into the treasury. To those other than Jesus watching, the poor widow's gift is unimpressive; he, however, sees the purity of her sacrifice. He instructs the disciples to take notice of what he knows is an extravagant gift. She provides the perfect model of selflessness and generosity. How something looks on the outside is often deceiving. We are easily misled by appearance. We may also try to fool others with our own flashiness or superficial gestures. God knows our hearts. He sees beyond our outward actions and comprehends our deepest intentions. No lavish action can hide insincerity. *Generous Lord, help me to be selfless in sharing not only my monetary gifts but also my immense riches of time, kindness, understanding, forgiveness, acceptance, and love.*

Tuesday, November 27, 2018 ~ Rv 14:14-19; Lk 21:5-11

Patricia Russell

"...the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." Luke's dark imagery tempts us to fearfully speculate about the end times. Jesus makes it clear, however, that the destruction of the Temple and the end of the age are separate. The fall of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple in 70 C.E. can certainly be seen as a concrete interpretation of the first part of Jesus' warning, but it did not usher in the end. Sadly, widespread war, natural disasters, and human suffering are commonplace. Those who use incidents of darkness and tribulation as signs of the Lord's immediate coming in final judgment take advantage of others' fear. We don't know the exact time of his coming. Acting as if we do makes us false prophets. We can be vigilant and prayerful, but we must do so as eager witnesses to his salvation and light, not as fear mongers of unavoidable destruction and damnation. *Give us, steadfast Lord, an indestructible faith to withstand the falsehoods and temptations of despair. Give us unwavering hope to joyfully anticipate your coming in glory.*

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 ~ Rv 15:1-4; Lk 21:12-19

Patricia Russell

"They will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name." Torture, arrest, persecution and even death are a reality for millions of Christians in the world today. According to Aid to the Church in Need, at least 75 percent of the victims of religiously motivated violence and oppression are Christians. Religious belief is the reason for discrimination, loss of property, abduction, torture, rape, slavery, banishment and murder for more than 215 million Christians worldwide, according to the Open Doors USA World Watch 2018 report. At least one Christian church somewhere in the world is attacked weekly, and Christians are routinely detained or imprisoned without trial. We must commit ourselves to increasing education, raising awareness, encouraging engagement at both the grassroots and global levels, and standing in solidarity with all of our persecuted brethren — Christian or otherwise. *God of all, safeguard your people from hate and intolerance. Fill the hearts of those who oppress with compassion and mercy.*

Daily Bread November 2018

Thursday, November 29, 2018 ~ Rv 18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3, 9a; Lk 21:20-28

Patricia Russell

Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.

As hostile Gentile armies surrounded Jerusalem, Jews perished in large numbers. Many Christians, however, fled across the Jordan River and avoided the tragic outcome of Jerusalem's fall. Religious discord of all kinds is still a major cause of civil war and flight. According to the U.S. State Department, 74 percent of the world's population lives in countries "with serious restrictions on religious freedom." A significant increase in migration has heightened awareness of the vulnerability of migrants and refugees as well as increased skepticism. There are obvious differences in willingness to open borders. Recipient nations may deny protection or shelter immigrants based on religion, exacerbating the problem or politicizing the response. An increasing number of religious refugees today find themselves facing uncertainty. With narrowing protection, denied asylum, and limited resettlement options, they fear being forcibly returned to persecution in their homeland. Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger. How do we defend religious freedom for all and protect the most vulnerable?

Almighty God, watch over those victimized and fleeing for their faith. Help us to bring safety, security and comfort to those who have no place to call home.

Friday, November 30, 2018 ~ Rom 10:9-18; Mt 4:18-22

St. Andrew, apostle

Patricia Russell

Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

In Metaphysics, Aristotle said, "There is nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses." St. Thomas Aquinas offers a similar assessment of the senses' connection to intellect. God communicates to us through what we see and hear. Our hearing involves interaction and there is an expectation of exchange. We indicate listening, understanding and engagement through an appropriate response. Pope Benedict XVI wrote in Lumen Fidei, "Faith is our response to a word which engages us personally, to a 'Thou' who calls us by name." Today, we celebrate St. Andrew who is honored as the Protoklete or "First Called." When he heard John the Baptist speak of Jesus, Andrew sought his brother Simon Peter and brought him to the Lord. Andrew professed with faith and hope, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). He became the preacher and interpreter of the word of Christ for the Greek world. May our hearing the word of Christ push us to an equally enthusiastic response.

Gentle Shepherd, let me hear and know your voice above the noise, confusion and conflicting calls of my day.