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The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions For This Month

General Intention:

That all teachers may know how to communicate love of the truth and instill authentic moral and spiritual values.

Mission Intention:

That the Christian communities of Asia may proclaim the Gospel with fervor, witnessing to its beauty with the joy of faith.

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Disciple

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Breaking Open the Word—Notes on the Sunday Gospels

Sep. 4 (Mt. 18:15-20)

Commenting on today's Gospel, one Scripture scholar says "Church discipline is a serious matter for her leaders. Jesus outlines a three-step procedure for (1) privately confronting the sinner, (2) addressing the sin before a circle of witnesses, and (3) bringing the matter before the Church. Emphasis is placed on reconciliation. If the member resists correction, the Church's leaders (apostles and successors) may exercise Christ's authority by disciplining the impenitent. This final decision is backed even by the Father (18:19)."

Sep. 11 (Mt. 18:21-35)

In today's Gospel we have the famous parable of the unforgiving servant. One famous theologian said about this parable, "Almost no other parable con-

fronts us so dramatically with the extent of our sinful lovelessness: we demand incessantly from our fellow men what we think they owe us, without giving a moment's thought to the immensity of the debt God has forgiven us. Distractedly we pray the petition of the Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also...' but we fail to consider how unwilling we are to renounce a bit of our earthly justice, even though God has waived passing heavenly judgment on us."

Sep. 18 (Mt. 20:1-16a)

In today's Gospel Jesus the "parable of the householder highlights God's generosity (20:15). It refers to Israel's labor throughout salvation history and climaxes with the inclusion of the Gentiles in the New Covenant. Despite complaints, there is no violation of justice;

God is not unfair to Israel, He is simply generous to late-coming Gentiles, making them equal members of His people."

Sep. 25 (Mt. 21:28-32)

There are 2 levels of meaning in today's Gospel: "The first is: A late conversion is better than the self-righteous delusion that one needs no conversion. Jesus has come to call and to heal the sick, not those who think themselves healthy (Mt. 9:12-13). The second teaching distinguishes sharply between talk and action. It contrasts a person who piously promises God he will do something and thereby deceives himself into thinking he has already done enough with one who actually does something, often with an outward demeanor that would not lead anyone to expect any such action from him."

Faith Foundations—Basics of Catholic Christian Belief

Revelation

(From the Compendium of the
Catechism of the Catholic Church)

The following is a brief overview of Catholic belief about the revelation.

What does God reveal to man?

God in his goodness and wisdom reveals himself. With deeds and words, he reveals himself and his plan of loving goodness which he decreed from all eternity in Christ. According to this plan, all people by the grace of

the Holy Spirit are to share in the divine life as adopted "sons" in the only begotten Son of God.

What are the first stages of God's Revelation?

From the very beginning, God manifested himself to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and invited them to intimate communion with himself. After their fall, he did not cease his revelation to them but promised salvation for all their descendants. After the flood, he made a covenant with Noah, a covenant between himself and all living

beings.

What are the next stages of God's Revelation?

God chose Abram, calling him out of his country, making him "the father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:5), and promising to bless in him "all the nations of the earth" (Genesis 12:3). The people descended from Abraham would be the trustee of the divine promise made to the patriarchs. God formed Israel as his chosen

(continued on next page)

Faith Foundations...Continued

people, freeing them from slavery in Egypt, establishing with them the covenant of Mount Sinai, and, through Moses, giving them his law. The prophets proclaimed a radical redemption of the people and a salvation which would include all nations in a new and everlasting covenant. From the people of Israel and from the house of King David, would be born the Messiah, Jesus.

What is the full and definitive stage of God's Revelation?

The full and definitive stage of God's revelation is accomplished in his Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, the mediator and fullness of Revelation. He, being the only-begotten Son of God made man, is the perfect and definitive Word of the Father. In the sending of the Son and the gift of the Spirit, Revelation

is now fully complete, although the faith of the Church must gradually grasp its full significance over the course of centuries.

"In giving us his Son, his only and definitive Word, God spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word, and he has no more to say." (Saint John of the Cross)



"The full and definitive stage of God's revelation is accomplished in his Word made flesh, Jesus Christ...."

Faith and Media—Reading and Viewing Recommendations

Book of the Month:

***A Biblical Walk Through the Mass* by Edward Sri**

This book is subtitled "Understanding what we say and do in the liturgy" and boy, does it deliver. I recently led a group study of this book and the supplemental DVD and the participants and myself felt we benefitted greatly from it. Dr. Sri walks through the biblical background and imagery of everything that takes place during Mass—from the opening Sign of the Cross to the concluding rite. His explanations

are clear and written for the non-theologian, which makes it accessible to people of all abilities. A great read to deepen your experience of the Mass, especially as we prepare for the new translation this Advent.

Film of the Month:

The Counterfeiters

This German film won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2007. It is based on the true story of Jewish printers and artists—led by a notorious counterfeiter who was arrested just before the war—who are put to work in a

concentration camp by the Nazis in order to create counterfeit money to fund the actions of the Reich. Tremendous moral tension is built around the conflict between two of the workers—one who is more than willing to do the work if it means living another day, and another who is subtly trying to undermine the effort as a way of avenging himself against the Nazis and all they stand for. This is a striking and powerful film that made an impression on me in a way that few recent films have.



Left: *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass* (Ascension)

Right: *The Counterfeiters* (Sony Pictures)

Catholic Calendar—Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

Faith Formation Bible Study Program

The Bible Timeline: 24-Part Study
(The first 12 sessions will be given in the fall. The last 12 sessions will be presented in the spring.)

**Diocesan Center, Scranton
Wednesdays, 2:00 p.m. –
4:00 p.m. beginning on
September 7**

The Great Adventure Bible Timeline provides the necessary information for one to study God's Word as it unfolds in the

Bible. This study presents the overarching study of God's plan of salvation and gives an understanding of how the people, events, and themes of Scripture fit together. Anyone who reads these 14 books will not only have a sequential history of the people of Israel, but will also learn the beginnings of the Christian Church.

Fee: \$60.00, includes the \$25.00 cost of the binder.

Note: Fee covers the 24 sessions, both fall and spring.
To register: Call 570.207.2213, Ext. 1107.

The Mystery of Faith:

Preparing to Receive the New English Texts of the Roman Missal

Msgr. Dale R. Rupert

Sept. 17: St. John Evangelist Church, E. Stroudsburg 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sept. 24: St. Joseph the Worker Church – Flemming Hall, Williamsport 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost: \$15 which includes a light lunch.

To register: Call 570.207.2213,

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..."

~1 Pt. 3:15