

Look to the Good Things

This Week's Readings at Mass

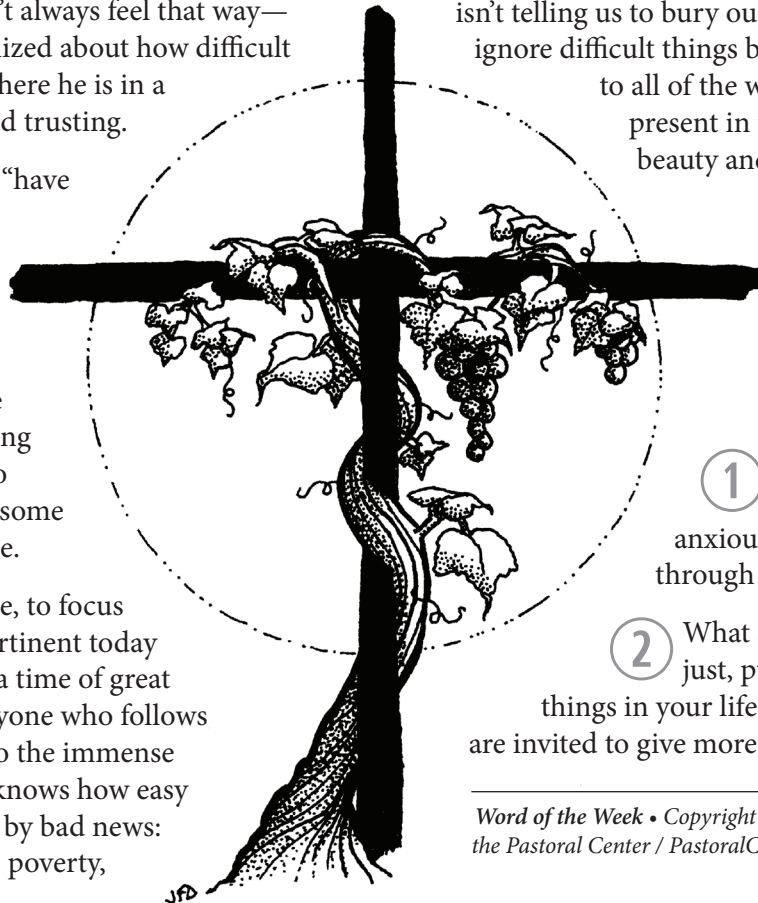
- ▶ Isaiah 5:1-7 • The vineyard song
- ▶ Philippians 4:6-9 • Joy and peace in Christ
- ▶ Matthew 21:33-43 • Parable of the tenants

We don't often focus on the second reading from the epistles, but Paul has a particularly beautiful message for us this week.

The words in Paul's letter to the Philippians are timeless in their comfort and encouragement, especially considering that historians think Paul wrote them while he was imprisoned. By the time of this writing, Paul had suffered immensely as a result of his faith. During his travels throughout the Mediterranean world teaching and preaching about Jesus, Paul had been arrested, beaten, imprisoned, chased out of town, shipwrecked, gone hungry, and bitten by a poisonous snake. Yet at times, he was still able to feel profound peace and gratitude and offer his troubles to God in prayer. We know from some of his other letters that he didn't always feel that way—there were times he agonized about how difficult his life journey was. But here he is in a good space, confident and trusting.

Paul's encouragement to "have no anxiety at all" may be easier said than done. Sometimes we can't just turn off our anxiety. Other times, though, just the reminder that we can bring our fears and concerns to God in prayer can bring some relief and a sense of peace.

Paul's next piece of advice, to focus on the good, is just as pertinent today as it was for him during a time of great suffering and unrest. Anyone who follows the news or is attentive to the immense pain in the world today knows how easy it is to feel overwhelmed by bad news: natural disasters, racism, poverty,



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"Keep on doing what you have learned, received, heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you."

Sheepish Question:
How and with whom shall I SHARE the peace of God in Christ Jesus today?

illness, etc. The media feeds us the more sensationalized stories—focusing on the one plane that crashes rather than the many that land safely each day. Paul isn't telling us to bury our heads in the sand and ignore difficult things but to turn our attention to all of the ways God is active and present in the world: in matters of beauty and truth and honor. This advice is an antidote just as needed today as any time in history.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Have you ever had an experience of being anxious but then finding peace through prayer?
- 2 What are some true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, or gracious things in your life right now to which you are invited to give more attention?