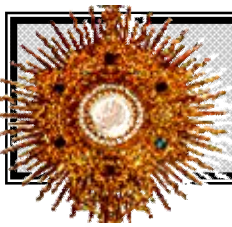


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The Week Ahead

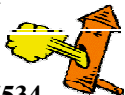
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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• Sunday 28

Deut 18:15-20, Psalm 94:1-2, 6-9, St Mark 1:21-28
A prophet speaks on behalf of God. It is God's word that Moses speaks, and Jesus can speak with authority because he is sent by God. The teaching Church speaks with authority because it continues the work of Christ, it has a prophetic role in the world. All the activities and charisms of the members come together to assist the teaching work of the whole Church.

• Monday 29

2 Sm 15:13-14, 30, 16:5-13, Psalm 3:2-8,
St Mark 5:1-20

David fleeing from his son Absalom, is merciful to Shimei, who curses him. Jesus shows God's mercy to the possessed man who accosts him.

• Tuesday 30

2 Sm 18:9-10, 14, 24-25, 30:19:3, Psalm 85:1-6,
St Mark 5:21-43

'Absalom! My son! My son!' David's classic cry of grief turns the day's victory into mourning. His feelings for his son transcends all the young man's faults. Jesus shows compassion for the suffering of the official whose daughter has died. **St Aidan** or Maedoc (Mogue) was born around 550, probably in Co. Cavan. Aidan studied under David in Wales, and on his return he founded a monastery at Ferns. He became bishop there and was renowned for his generosity and kindness. He died in 626 and his *Lives* testify to his popularity both in Cavan and in Ferns.

Bl. Margaret Ball was imprisoned for teaching Catholicism, harbouring priests and having Mass celebrated in her home. The harsh conditions of Dublin Castle wore down this old lady of gentle birth, and she died there in 1584.

Bl. Francis Taylor was born in Swords, Co. Dublin, and was elected Mayor of Dublin in 1595. For his Catholic faith he was put in prison for seven years and died of the hardships suffered there on 30 January 1621 at the age of seventy.

• Wednesday 31

2 Sm 24:2, 9-17, Psalm 31:1-2, 5-7, St Mark 6:1-6
David suffers for his pride in taking a census. Jesus is rejected by his own people.

St John Bosco, 1815-88, born in Piedmont, founded the Salesians to educate boys for life. He also became involved in publishing catechetical material for youth. He is a patron saint of youth and of Catholic publishers.

• Thursday 1 February

Job 31:16-20, 24-25, 31-32, or Eph 3:14-21,
Psalm 106:35-38, 41-42 St Luke 6:32-38

St Brigid is renowned for her hospitality, almsgiving and care of the sick. She was born c. 454. When she was young her father wished to make a very suitable marriage for her but she insisted in consecrating her virginity to God.

She received the veil and spiritual formation probably from St Mel and stayed for a period under his direction in Ardagh. Others followed her example and this led her to found a double monastery in Kildare with the assistance of Bishop Conleth. She died in 524 and her cult is widespread not only throughout Ireland but in several European lands. The St Brigid's Cross, in legend used by Brigid to explain the Christian faith, remains a popular sign of God's protection.

• Friday 2

Mal 3:1-4, or Heb 2:14-18, Psalm 23:7-10,
St Luke 2:22-40

The Presentation of the Lord. This feast is a remembrance of the Lord and Mary, the Mother of the Lord, and to acclaim him like Simeon, who recognised Christ as a 'light to reveal God to the nations'.

• Saturday 3

1 Kg 3:4-13, Psalm 118:9-14, St Mark 6:30-34
Solomon is remembered and favoured for the beauty of his choice of gift from God. His desire was for a heart to discern between good and evil. Jesus took pity on the crowd for they were like sheep without a shepherd. May the Good Shepherd make us always ready to do God's will in every kind of good action.

St Ansgar, a Frenchman, who became Archbishop of Hamburg in the ninth century, and preached the gospel in Denmark and Sweden. Apostle of Scandinavia. Patron of Denmark.

St Blaise, died 315. Bishop of Sebaste, martyred in Armenia. Tradition states that he was a physician before becoming a bishop. Since the eighth century he has been venerated as patron of those who suffer from disease of the throat.

Blessing of Throats The blessing of St Blaise is a sign of our faith in God's protection and love for us and for the sick. Using two crossed and unlighted candles, blessed on the memorial of St Blaise or on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the minister touches the throat of each person, saying, 'Through the intercession of St Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from all ailments of the throat and from every other evil (or from every disease of the throat and from every other illness). In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.'

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The Pope's Intention for January 2018

Evangelization: Religious Minorities in Asia That Christians, and other religious minorities in Asian countries, may be able to practise their faith in full freedom.