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For Sunday, September 27, 2015

Pope Francis and the Family

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/092715.cfm>

Numbers 11:25-29

James 5:1-6

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48



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This week, Pope Francis begins his [historic visit to the United States](#).

We can expect the news media to provide extensive coverage and analysis of [this popular pontiff's](#) words and actions, with Time Warner Cable [dedicating a channel to the visit](#) for “fans of Pope Francis.”

As is characteristic of his papacy to this point, the Holy Father's visit will not only be an opportunity for

him to speak to the people of the United States with his words but also with highly symbolic actions. Though his addresses to the General Assembly of the United Nations and to a joint meeting of Congress will be parsed and scrutinized, the most searing images will no doubt come from the interreligious service at [the 9/11 Memorial](#), a visit to [Our Lady Queen of Angels School](#) in East Harlem, and a tour of the [Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility](#) in Philadelphia. Perhaps more than anything the Holy Father says, the images from these visits will remain deep in our collective psyche.

The climax of the Pope's visit will be the eighth [World Meeting of Families](#) in Philadelphia. This year's theme, [Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive](#), fits with the Holy Father's call to us to highlight love and mercy in our catechesis and personal witness.

The Pope will be visiting a country whose [family structures](#) have shifted significantly over the past fifty years. Not only has the family been suffering the consequences of social change but of [economic ones as well](#). All these issues will be very much on his mind during his visit and we can expect him to challenge all of us to put love and mercy at the center of family life and people at the center of public policy.

This Sunday, when Pope Francis celebrates Mass for as many [as 1.5 million pilgrims](#) expected to crowd into the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the readings will resonate with many of the themes of his papacy.

In the first reading from the Book of Numbers, Moses' spirit is bestowed on seventy elders who are given a share in his ministry. Just so, Pope Francis has challenged us to be more inclusive in calling people of all backgrounds to the work of ministry. In the second reading, Saint James rails against the corruption of wealth. In the same way, Pope Francis has called on those of us in the developed world to live with less so that we will have more to share with the poor. Finally, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus assures the disciples that "whoever is not against us is for us." Similarly, Pope Francis has challenged us to partner with those of all faiths and of no faith to work together for the common good.

The pope's visit to the United States is sure to be marked with memorable moments as well as controversial challenges. For all of us, it will be an opportunity to share our faith with friends and family members who interest will be piqued by this charismatic successor of Peter.

Douglas Sousa, STL

PRAYER

God and Father of us all,
in Jesus, your Son and our Savior,
you have made us
your sons and daughters
in the family of the Church.

May your grace and love
help our families
in every part of the world
be united to one another
in fidelity to the Gospel.

May the example of the Holy Family,
with the aid of your Holy Spirit,
guide all families, especially those most troubled,
to be homes of communion and prayer
and to always seek your truth and live in your love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, pray for us!

—[Prayer for the World Meeting of Families](#).

NOTICES

RESPECT LIFE MONTH

October is Respect Life Month, and the first Sunday of October is Respect Life Sunday. The USCCB has several resources available to encourage special events and activities throughout October. View the materials at <http://usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/index.cfm>.

PARISH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, October 14-16, Phoenix

The Diocese of Phoenix is hosting its 2015 Parish Leadership Conference from October 14–16 at St. Paul Parish in Phoenix, Arizona, with keynote speaker Sherry Weddell, author of *Forming Intentional Disciples*. Be sure to visit LPi at our booth. For more information and to register, visit <http://www.diocesephoenix.org/stewardship-day.php>.

DIOCESAN FISCAL MANAGERS CONFERENCE, September 27–30, Atlanta

The Diocesan Fiscal Managers Conference (DFMC) will take place in Atlanta from September 27–30, 2015. The keynote speaker this year will be the Most Revered Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta. LPi will be attending DFMC as well, so if you're attending, be sure to stop by our booth to say hi! More information is available at <http://www.4lpi.com/live-events/events-and-conferences/>.

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