

Monday in 18th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 3rd August 2026:

We like it when our priests say that God loves us and we are assured of heaven but we are less happy when our priests say, God loves us but invites us to turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel, for real love is sacrificial, the giving of ourselves for the sake of the gospel and the salvation of souls. We like it when our priests say, Vatican II '*changed all that*' and we no longer need to do '*this or that*', and less happy when our priests say, no, our duties and obligations bring us real freedom because they help us break free from the shallowness of this world and build in us a pattern of holiness, culminating in our saintliness. The crowd who followed Jesus were impressed with him and the miracles he worked. They were hungry for food, sound teaching and consolation, but when he invites them to renounce themselves and pick up their cross daily, they hesitate; indeed, his disciples will betray him, deny him and abandon him in his hour of need. Now, in the Church, we all have a second chance!

The Memorial of St John Mary Vianney, Priest – Tuesday 4th August 2026:

On arriving in Ars, John found people more interested in dancing and drinking than attending Mass. He revealed their sins to them so they could understand God's love and the pathway to salvation. On the way to Ars, he gets lost, telling a shepherd boy, '*if you show me the way to Ars, I will show you the way to heaven!*' Despite their sins, John dispenses God's mercy to them, being a prolific confessor, spending hours in the confessional. He had an amazing pastoral zeal, and lived an austere lifestyle, imposing hard penances on himself. His example brought many people back to the faith, which many people had lost after the Revolution. He was greatly troubled by the devil, by parishioners who did not like his preaching, and often inflicted by illness. He attempted to run away from Ars four times but each time he returned to ministry.

The Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major – Wed. 5th August 2026

Mary Major is the most significant 'Marian' Church because of its age and size and built in the wake of the Council of Ephesus' declaration that Mary is Theotokos: Mother of God. Our Feast, previously called '*Our Lady of the Snows*' due to the story of its foundation. A Roman patrician and his wife, who were without heirs, vowed to donate their possessions to the Virgin Mary. After praying for guidance, on 5th August, at the height of the Roman summer, snow fell on the summit of the Esquiline Hill. That same night, they had a vision of Our Lady asking for a Church built in her honour.

The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord – Thurs. 6th August 2026:

Jesus takes his closest disciples up the Holy Mountain for two reasons:

1. To prepare them for the scandal of the cross, showing them that although he will suffer and die, it will usher in the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets.
2. To show them his divine nature and give them a glimpse of the body we will have at the Resurrection on the Last Day.

For us, the '*Transfiguration*' will be a complete '*metamorphosis*' of our nature, no longer frail and corrupt but splendid with the glory and perfection always intended by God, damaged and distorted by our sins. The Transfiguration we experience at the Resurrection will be our second regeneration, for we experienced a regeneration of our souls in Baptism, when the old creation was washed away and we were reborn anew, washed clean in the blood of the lamb, awakened as a child of God.

Friday in 18th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 7th August 2026:

We expect those who have harmed us to be brought to justice. However, in bringing people to account, we do not wish their annihilation but their rehabilitation. Divine love, poured into our hearts, helps us live in the spirit of the Beatitudes, resisting the temptation to build our lives on the illusion of power, wealth and status. In calling us to deny ourselves and pick up our cross, we see that God does not bless pride or selfishness, but instead values an attitude of humility, truthfulness and faithful discipleship. It means, we may choose mercy over justice, forgiveness over retribution and sacrifice over our self-interest. Following Jesus in His poverty, imitates the one who came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. We ask ourselves, '*what in my life do I need to give up or do less of?*' And in finding this freedom, '*how may I put to the service of God, His Church and His People, how do I play my part in proclaiming the gospel and work for the salvation of souls?*'

The Memorial of St Dominic, Priest – Saturday 8th August 2026:

Dominic was moved by the sufferings people were experiencing during the famine of 1191 and so, sold his possession to buy them food. The Pope sent him to France to convert heretics back to the Faith. He debated the heretics, but they couldn't defend themselves because they couldn't argue with the truth, so they threatened him instead. Despite the threats, Dominic travelled through the region, preaching and converting many back to Catholicism, the basis of the Order of Preachers founded in his name.