

Monday in 20th Week in Ordinary Time – 17th August 2026:

There are only a few things that the Church mandates that we do, and so, if we are coming to Mass, then we are probably going in the right direction. We must never, though, be complacent; and so, today, we might ponder the question of the Rich Young Man: *'What do I lack?'* I doubt no-one thinks they are the complete package, but do we look deep into our soul and consider what more is needed in order to finally reach our perfection? In our reflection, do we ask ourselves, what is it in my life that prevents us from following the Lord? What are we prepared to leave behind in order to 'pass-over' into eternal life? The answer, of course, will be different from person to person. It may be one of the seven deadly sins: *Pride, Greed, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Wrath or Sloth*, one or more might be preventing us from committing to our service or vocation.

Tuesday in 20th Week in Ordinary Time – 18th August 2026:

Homilists can be tempted to soften Christ's message, making it easier to hear, especially to those who are successful and live in great comfort and who may not want to know that their spiritual life may be in jeopardy, unless they convert their hearts. Jesus is blunt, telling us that those who put their hearts on worldly things will find it almost impossible to obtain a share in God's Kingdom because they will always find it difficult to let go of their earthly security. Only by God's grace do we obtain heaven and although this cannot be achieved by our own merits, we are expected to co-operate with God's grace in our spiritual service. Our service of the gospel is a message to the rich and powerful nations (and individuals within them) that human pride is often at the heart of all humanity's struggles. All of us will stand before the judgement seat of God and give an account of his stewardship. At that time, none of our wealth or possessions will be of any use, for only the quality of our faith, hope and love will be of any value.

The Opt. memorial of St John Eudes, Priest – Wednesday 19th August 2026:

John Eudes was a French priest who first joined the Oratory where he worked as a volunteer caring for plague victims. In time, he built a reputation as an outstanding preacher and confessor and was known for opposition to Jansenism, a rigid distortion of the Christian Faith. On leaving the Oratory he founded (despite opposition) the Congregation of Jesus and Mary where he found refuges for fallen women. Along with St Mary Margaret Alacoque he is credited with initiating devotion to the Sacred Heart, his popular devotion called, *"The Devotion to the Adorable Heart of Jesus."*

The Memorial of St Bernard, Abbott & Doctor – Thursday 20th August 2026:

St Bernard was a reforming Abbot, who took his vow of poverty to heart. The beginnings of the Clairvaux community were trying and painful. When the Pope visited, the kitchen could only muster a couple of fish and there was certainly no wine. It was not a table feast that was served to the Pope, but a feast of virtue. Bernard had a deep appreciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, seeing her yes as the model of our own discipleship. When we say yes to God and announce the gospel, like her, we '*magnify the Lord*', making his presence more keenly felt to our society and community.

The Memorial of St Pius X, Pope – Friday 21st August 2026:

Today is the memorial of St Pius X (1835-1914) who was concerned about Modernism, a tendency to water everything down. The doctrines of the Catholic Church aren't simply intellectual propositions, but a reflection of the lived Christian experience based on Sacred Scripture and Holy Tradition, interpreted by an authentic '*Magisterium*', a teaching office that sustains our orthodox belief in accord with everything Christ, through the Apostles, has taught us. Many of the heresies that still pervade the Church have already been discussed and rejected. For instance, 'Arianism' which tries to suggest that Christ isn't quite God, the implication being we can twist his teachings when they get difficult. And then there is the heresy of '*Pelagianism*' which suggests that we don't need the grace of God to get to heaven, that we can do it by ourselves.

The Memorial of Our Lady, The Queen Mother of Heaven – Sat. 22nd August 2026:

This is the octave day of the celebration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The four Marian anthems express Mary's Queenship: firstly, in Advent, the '*Alma Redemptoris Mater*' acknowledges Mary's assumption; that she's the gate of heaven and star of the sea. In Lent, the '*Ave Regina Caelorum*' shows how the Queen of Heaven pleads with Christ to spare our souls from an everlasting death. At Easter, the '*Regina Coeli*' rejoices in the Lord's Resurrection, recognizing that it was Mary's 'yes' to be the Mother of God that allowed the Word to be made flesh. Now in Ordinary Time, the '*Salve Regina*', our holy queen and mother is acknowledged as our most gracious advocate with her Son. Then in the '*Litany of Loreto*' we sing of Mary as Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, Queen of the Saints and Queen of Families and Queen of Peace. In other words, she is queen of all of us; and as Queen, she is also our mother.