



## August Toolkit – *Homily Helps*

### 1. The Transfiguration of Our Lord — Aug. 6

- On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, we meditate on the profound mystery of Christ’s earthly life (Lk 9:28-36).
- The early Church fathers note that Christ chose the specific three Apostles to be witnesses of his transfiguration because of the roles they would be given: Peter as head of the Church, John the responsibility of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and James the first of the 12 Apostles to be martyred.
- We recognize that God the Father showed James, John and Peter that Jesus was his Son — and by extension, he also told us.
- St. Ambrose: “... unless you ascend the summit of a higher wisdom, you behold not what glory there is in the word of God. Now the garments of the Word are the discourses of the Scriptures, and certain clothings of the Divine mind; and as His raiment shone white, so in the eyes of your understanding, the sense of the divine words becomes clear. Hence after Moses, Elias; that is, the Law and the Prophets in the Word. For neither can the Law exist without the Word, nor the Prophet, unless he prophesied of the Son of God” (*Catena Aurea*).
- Pope Francis: “Listen to Jesus and follow him. That is the message of the Transfiguration.”
- *Catechism*: “From now on we share in the Lord’s Resurrection through the Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ’s glorious coming, when he ‘will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body.’ But it also recalls that ‘it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God’” (CCC 556).
- The transfiguration reminds us of the goal of our Christian journey: to be united with God in heaven. Just as Jesus was transfigured before his disciples, we too will be transformed into the image of Christ and share in his eternal glory.

### 2. The Immaculate Heart of Our Lady — August

- Our Lady said to the children at Fatima, “You see Hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If they do what I will tell you, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace ... In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, and it will be converted, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world ...” [Our Lady of Fatima](#)
  - *Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary — Aug. 15*

- Pope Pius XII: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory” (*Munificentissimus Deus*).
- Revelation: “A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (12:1).
- St. John of Damascene: “It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. . . . It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in the act of giving birth to him, should look upon him as he sits with the Father.”
- *Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary* — **Aug. 22**
- Why is Mary referred to as the Queen of Heaven? In the Old Testament, the mother of the king would have been the queen, rather than his wife (1 Kgs 2:13-21).
- She is Queen of the Angels, Saints, Apostles, Prophets, etc, per the [Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#), one of only six litanies approved by the Holy See for public recitation.
- Pope Pius XII: “We are instituting a feast so that all may recognize more clearly and venerate more devoutly the merciful and maternal sway of the Mother of God. We are convinced that this feast will help to preserve, strengthen and prolong that peace among nations which daily is almost destroyed by recurring crises. Is she not a rainbow in the clouds reaching towards God, the pledge of a covenant of peace?” (*Ad Caeli Reginam*)

### 3. **St. Monica** — Aug. 27 and **St. Augustine** — Aug. 28

- *St. Monica*
  - Patron saint of mothers, wives who suffer domestic problems, difficult marriages, and of alcoholism. She was born around 332 in northern Africa to Christian parents. She was married to a pagan man, with whom she had three children, one being St. Augustine. Monica prayed without ceasing for the conversion of her family members and loved ones. Her husband converted to the faith a year before his death.
  - When Augustine had strayed far away from the Church, she begged a bishop to help to convert her lost son. He told her, “It is impossible that the child of so many tears should perish.” Augustine wrote in his *Confessions* that she watered the ground with her tears wherever she walked.
  - Monica was very persistent in her prayers, and she always prayed and cried for her loved ones. She was very devoted to the Lord in the Eucharist and assisted at Mass daily. Augustine wrote this of his mother: “She did not let a day pass without being present at the Divine Sacrifice before Your altar, O Lord.”
  - Monica followed Augustine when he went to Rome. He even lied to her about when he was leaving so that she missed the boat. However, she continued to chase him down to watch over him. When she arrived in Rome, she

discovered he had gone to Milan. Nevertheless, she continued to pursue him and eventually witnessed his conversion under St. Ambrose.

- *St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church*
  - St. Augustine is the son of St. Monica and was born around 354 in northern Africa.
  - He spent his youth far from the faith and in a state of grave sin. In *Confessions*, he outlines his greatest struggles, such as fornication, vanity and pride.
  - After many years of being a Manichean (an early church heresy), he eventually met St. Ambrose and was fascinated by his rhetoric. Ambrose guided Augustine to the faith and he was finally baptized after many years of his mother crying and praying for his soul.
  - St. Augustine became a priest and then a bishop. He is a Doctor of the Church, and his philosophical and theological works are seemingly everlasting.
    - “To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement.”
    - “Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever; and take care of your soul as if you were going to die tomorrow.”
    - “There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future.”
  - There is a famous anecdote of St. Augustine trying to understand the Trinity:
    - “The story goes that he saw a little boy digging a hole in the sand, and then running to the ocean, filling up his hands with the seawater, running back to the hole and emptying the water into the hole. Augustine watched as the child went back and forth several times. Finally, he said to the boy, “What are you doing?” The boy said, ‘Trying to fill that hole with the ocean.’ And Augustine said, ‘You’ll never fit the ocean in that hole,’ and the boy said, ‘Neither will you be able to fit the Trinity into your mind’.”

#### 4. Martyrdom — August

- In August, we honor many great martyrs of the faith: four of which are Sts. Lawrence, Maximilian Kolbe, Bartholomew the Apostle and John the Baptist. As Christians, we are called to offer radical self-sacrifice for the service of God in their example:
  - *St. Lawrence — Aug. 10*
    - St. Lawrence is credited with bringing Rome’s poor to the emperor and referring to them as “treasures of the Church.”
    - St. Lawrence is also known for his wit and joy during his horrific martyrdom. St. Ambrose of Milan recorded that St. Lawrence was roasted to death on a grill of sorts and a Latin poet recorded him saying, “Turn me over, I am done on this side.”
    - His death was followed with many conversions to the faith.
    - He had a special devotion to serving the poor.
  - *St. Maximilian Kolbe — Aug. 14*
    - St. Maximilian Kolbe was a priest during the Holocaust. He was taken to Auschwitz for his faith. While there, the commander of the camp decided to pick ten men to starve to death. The saint, while not chosen,

volunteered to die in the place of another man who had a family and children.

- He was starved and given no water for two weeks, but he would not die. The entire time, he led the prisoners in prayer. The guards then gave him a lethal injection.
- *St. Bartholomew* — **Aug. 24**
  - St. Bartholomew was an Apostle and martyr. He was flayed (skinned alive) and then beheaded for Christ's sake.
- *The Passion of John the Baptist* — **Aug. 29**
  - St. John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets who prepared the way for the Messiah.
  - He was the first person, apart from the Virgin Mary, to recognize the divinity of the child in her womb.
  - He spent his life praying, fasting and doing penance for the conversion of sinners. He then began baptizing people.
  - He condemned Herod's invalid marriage and preached truth and morals, and therefore was imprisoned and beheaded by Herod's order.
  - St. Gregory the Great: "And John is not sought out to suffer concerning the confession of Christ, but for the truth of righteousness. But because Christ is truth, he goes to death for Christ in going for truth" (*Catena Aurea*).

## 5. The Ministerial Priesthood — August

- Three saints who are honored this month are Sts. Alphonsus Liguori, John Vianney, and Pius X on Aug. 21. These holy men were known for their devotion to the holy sacrifice of the Mass and for their love and passionate defense of the priesthood.
- *St. Alphonsus Liguori* — **Aug. 1**
  - He was born in 1696 near Naples, Italy. He is venerated as a Doctor of the Church and a few of his literary works are *Uniformity with God's Will*, the *Way of the Cross*, and *The Glories of Mary*. He founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known as the Redemptorists, in November 1732.
  - "Know that of all devotions the most pleasing to Mary is to have frequent recourse to her, asking her favors."
  - "The sovereigns of the earth do not always grant audience readily; on the contrary, the King of Heaven, hidden under the eucharistic veils, is ready to receive anyone..."
  - "God Himself cannot bring about an action holier and greater than the celebration of a Holy Mass."
  - "Without the Mass, the earth would have already been destroyed by the sins of men many ages ago."
- *St. John-Marie Vianney* — **Aug. 4**
  - Also called the Cure d'Ars, St. John Vianney was a French priest born in 1786. He is the patron saint of parish priests.
    - "If I were to meet a priest and an angel, I would greet the priest first and then the angel ... If there were no priest, the passion and death of Jesus would serve no purpose. What use is a treasure chest full of gold

if there is no one who can unlock it? The priest has the key to the treasures of Heaven.”

- “O, Mary, may all nations glorify your Immaculate Heart! May the whole world invoke and bless your Immaculate Heart!”
  - “When the heart is pure and simple it cannot help loving, because it has discovered the source of love which is God.”
  - “There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.”
  - “The sign of the cross is the most terrible weapon against the devil. Thus the Church wishes not only that we have it continually in front of our minds to recall to us just what our souls are worth and what they cost Jesus Christ, but also that we should make it at every juncture ourselves: when we go to bed, when we awaken during the night, when we get up, when we begin any action, and, above all, when we are tempted.”
  - “A priest goes to Heaven, or a priest goes to Hell with a thousand people behind.”
- *St. Pius X* — **Aug. 21**
    - Born Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto in modern-day Italy in 1835, the future pope was a beloved country parish priest before being appointed bishop, cardinal and eventually pontiff. He was known for his charity, profound humility and devotion and enthusiasm for the traditions of the Church. He was an avid defender against the heresy of modernism.
      - “If the Angels could envy, they would envy us for Holy Communion.”
      - “Lowered the age for First Communion to seven years, if not to allow Jesus to enter into the innocent hearts of children, which are so similar to angels ...”
      - “If there were one million families praying the Rosary every day, the entire world would be saved.”
      - “Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven.”

## 6. Other Notable Feast Days — August

- *St. Dominic* — **Aug. 8**
  - St. Dominic was born in 1170 in Spain. He founded the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) and was a fierce defender against heresy. In 1208, Our Lady appeared to him and gave him the holy rosary. She told him: “Wonder not that you have obtained so little fruit by your labors, you have spent them on barren soil, not yet watered with the dew of Divine grace. When God willed to renew the face of the earth, He began by sending down on it the fertilizing rain of the Angelic Salutation. Therefore, preach my Psalter composed of 150 Angelic Salutations and 15 Our Fathers, and you will obtain an abundant harvest.”
- *St. Clare of Assisi* — **Aug. 11**
  - St. Clare of Assisi was born in 1194 in Italy. She is best known for founding the Poor Clares, which closely followed the charism of St. Francis, especially his emphasis on total poverty. She is credited with saving her city twice from invasion and destruction, once by having the chaplain elevate the Blessed

Sacrament in the direction of those attacking the city walls. The enemy soon retreated, and the city was saved.

- *St. Louis IX, King of France* — **Aug. 25**
  - He was born in 1214 in Poissy, France, and crowned king at the age of 12. He led crusades against Muslim holdings in North Africa, Egypt and the Holy Land. He was captured and ransomed for the faith and eventually released. St. Louis attended several Masses every day, and a minister of the government complained, remarking that he could better devote that time to the affairs of the kingdom. St. Louis replied, “If I spent twice that time in amusements, like hunting, no one would have any objection.”
  - “Every day the King of France, St. Louis IX, would assist at Holy Mass on his knees, on the bare floor. One time a valet offered him a kneeler, but the king told him, ‘At Mass God offers Himself as a sacrifice, and when God sacrifices Himself, kings should kneel on the floor’” (*Jesus, Our Eucharistic Love*).