

July 18, 2008  
Friday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8

Isaiah 38:10, 11,

12abcd, 16

Matthew 12:1-8

*I say to you, something greater than the temple is here.  
If you knew what this meant, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice', you would not have  
condemned these innocent men.*

I believe that we need to be reminded that the law is not the end result, and that getting it right is not the definition of success. When I was about 10 years old, I was given a children's cookbook for my birthday. In this cookbook I found a recipe for beef stew and with great excitement, I prepared to make dinner for my family. My parents generously bought the meat and vegetables for the stew and I spent hours in the kitchen muddling through this new endeavor for I had never cooked before. As I was juggling my time between the stew, the side dishes, and preparing the table, the stew burnt. I was disappointed and embarrassed. I considered it inedible, as did my brother. My mother tried to console me, reminding me that it was my first attempt at something new. My father, on the other hand, ate it while exclaiming with nearly every bite its 'suburb' flavor. Even at 10 I was not fooled by the false praise, nor did I miss the love behind the kind gesture. I did not intellectually understand that day that this was a gift of mercy, but I experienced it to such a degree that I vividly remember that incidence today. All I could think of that day was the waste of money, food, and money—the stupidity of my mistakes. Yet, my father 's thoughts were about me, and my wellbeing, not the cost or the waste or even the absence of a good meal that night. None of that was mentioned, nor was I given instructions on the 'right' way to prepare a meal. I do not remember what we ate that evening for dinner, but I do remember the message in the incident—people are more important than anything.

*God is not what you imagine or what you think you understand. If you understand  
you have failed. ~Saint Augustine*