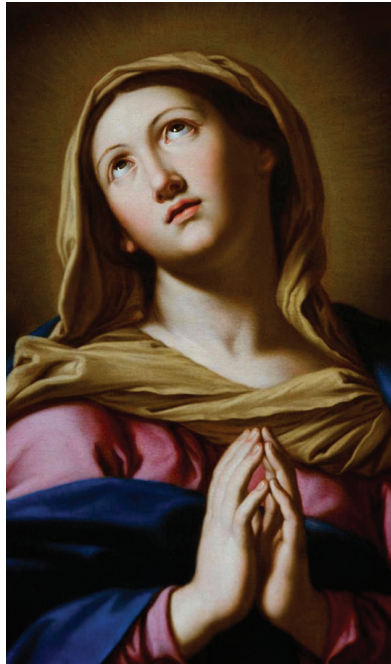


SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017

OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD;
SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE
MOTHER OF GOD; WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE
A woman of peace

On a day devoted to both Mary and praying for peace, it is striking to think of how much violence Mary was close to. As a betrothed but unwed mother, she faced the possibility of death by stoning. Then she found out that the king wanted her child, along with many others, dead and conducted genocide to accomplish his goal. Finally, she had to witness the violent death of her son on a cross. Violence and death, though, are not the whole story, then or now. Peace can grow in the ashes of violence, and new life can come out of death. At least that's what happens in God's way of doing things. Pray for peace today, both for yourself and the world. But don't only pray; do something to help bring peace to conflict.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers* 6:22-27; *Galatians* 4:4-7; *Luke* 2:16-21 (18). "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart."



THE VIRGIN IN GLORY, GIOVANNI BATTISTA SAIVI DA SASSOFERRATO (1609-1685)

MONDAY, JANUARY 2 MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS AND DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH **Meet the Cappodocians**

How's this for a circle of family and friends: One of the brothers of the fourth-century bishop and theologian Saint Basil was Bishop Gregory of Nyssa. Counted also as saints are Basil's grandmother, father, another of his brothers, and his sister. His good friend was Bishop Gregory of Nazianzus, also remembered today. Basil and his illustrious group came from the Greek region of Cappodocia, which had a tough reputation. They liked to tell the story that when a snake bit a Cappodocian, the snake died. Follow these holy Cappodocians and put some bite in your faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 2:22-28; *John* 1:19-28 (205). "They said to John, 'Who are you? . . . What do you say about yourself?'"

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3 MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS **What's in a name? Everything**

Do you know the name of the person who delivers your mail? What about the manager of your grocery store or the CEO of your power company? Our automated, electronic, virtual world makes it nearly impossible to have personal contact with people who perform important services for us each day. Yet, amazingly, we know the name of our Divine Savior, whom we are encouraged to call directly for help. We honor the holy name of Jesus because God was revealed to us personally through Jesus, who invited us to share in his life and perform works of love and mercy in his name. What will you do today in the name of Jesus?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 2:29—3:6; *John* 1:29-34 (206). "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4 MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS **A woman for all seasons**

Elizabeth Seton (1774-1821) became a Catholic at 30, after the death of her husband and over the protests of her Episcopalian family and friends. She had always been active in the sup-

port of poor widows and their children, enough to merit her the nickname "the Protestant Sister of Charity." Estranged from her relatives, the now-Catholic Elizabeth banded together with like-minded women to become the Daughters of Charity of St. Joseph. The sisters established orphanages and hospitals, but their commitment to the parochial school system became their renown.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 3:7-10; *John* 1:35-42 (207). "We have found the Messiah, which is translated Christ."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5 MEMORIAL OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP **A penny's worth of good**

Children resist accompanying their parents to places that are no fun for them: the bank, grocery store, or gas station. This list may also include church. Young John Neumann was no different. He wouldn't attend Mass, the rosary, or Stations with his mother unless she sweetened the deal with a penny. Mrs. Neumann got a good return on those pennies! So did the American church. The future bishop would

walk miles to deliver sacraments to a single child—who may have felt similarly uninspired without a penny's worth of investment. Share your faith with a child.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 3:11-21; *John* 1:43-51 (208). "Whoever does not love remains in death."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6 MEMORIAL OF ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS **Knock and the door will open**

Nearly rejected by his order, the sickly Blessed André Bessette (1845-1937) was finally allowed to become a religious brother. His superiors figured that "if he can't work, at least he'll be good at praying." It turns out he was good at both. Assigned to be the porter—a kind of greeter and errand boy—at Notre Dame college in Montreal, he spent his days listening to the concerns of all who arrived at his door, especially the poor and afflicted. He lived to be 91 and became known for his healings and his devotion to Saint Joseph. Today, pray in his memory to Saint Joseph for your needs or the needs of a loved one.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 5:5-13; *Mark* 1:7-11 or *Luke* 3:23-28 (209). "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7 MEMORIAL OF RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT, PRIEST **Serve when called**

After his surprise election to be president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2010, Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York quipped, "The posture of the bishops, of course, is you don't really run for office, you run from it." Saint Raymond of Peñafort (1175-1275) would have agreed. A scholar and lawyer, he entered the Dominican order at the relatively late age of 47 and did his best to avoid getting promoted. Sickness kept him from being named an archbishop, but he couldn't get out of becoming general of the Dominicans. There are times you may be asked to step up—like serving on a committee or caring for a relative. Remember that even reluctant leaders can lead!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John* 5:14-21; *John* 2:1-11 (210). "You have kept the good wine until now."



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

© 2016 TrueQuest Communications. For more on our contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. To subscribe: TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe; 800-942-2811; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Art may be subject to additional copyright. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition.