

Sunday, Jun 30, 2019

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

How free do you dare to be?

You're only as free as your nearest master. That might be a person who exerts authority over you. It could also be an addiction that governs your decisions or a personal "Prime Directive" that shapes your choices. Not all forces that hold sway over us are negative. We may choose to be governed by moral principles, or to follow the recommendations of our doctors or the commandments of the Bible. The higher our governing authority, the more freedom we'll experience. If the only power we answer to is ourselves, we may be in for a rough ride.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21; Galatians 5:1, 13-18; Luke 9:51-62 (99). "For freedom Christ set us free . . . do not submit again to the yoke of slavery."

Monday, Jul 01, 2019

MEMORIAL OF JUNÍPERO SERRA, PRIEST

Faithful to the journey

The Franciscan friar Junípero Serra did not become a missionary until he was 56, after years of teaching philosophy in Spain. In 18th-century colonial California, Serra set up missions a day's journey apart, or however far he could walk on his bad leg, in which an insect bite had caused a chronic infection. Eventually he established nine missions, among them San Luis Obispo and San Juan Capistrano. At one point he made his way to Mexico City and back to plead the Native Americans' case with the Spanish authorities. Pope Francis canonized him on September 23, 2015 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. It's never too late to renew your path in life as a Christian. Look at each day as a daily pilgrimage, one you can get through even if you have to limp. How far can you get today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 18:16-33; Matthew 8:18-22 (377). "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

Tuesday, Jul 02, 2019

A calm port in a storm

The world has seen its share of disasters, both natural and of human origin: earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, oil spills, and wars, to name a few. People also experience their own personal catastrophes: illnesses, deaths, losses of jobs and homes, the crumbling of families and relationships. Such events can give us some perspective on biblical stories like the one about the sleeping Jesus and his scared-to-death disciples on a storm-tossed boat. It can be hard to trust God—or anyone for that matter—when events threaten to overcome us. It is at those times, though, that trust is most needed. Take some biblical advice. Jesus "rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm." In the face of calamity, the voice of God is not in the sound and fury but in the stillness of your heart.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 19:15-29; Matthew 8:23-27 (378). "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?"

Wednesday, Jul 03, 2019

FEAST OF THOMAS, APOSTLE

Have your doubts

How we need Saint Thomas now. He, more than anyone, could understand our swishy tango between doubt and faith. When so

many institutions—governmental, religious, financial—behave abysmally, doubt seems the only appropriate response. How can intelligent people trust those who only seem to act out of greed and hypocrisy? For Thomas, as for us, doubt is the portal to truth. The ultimate pragmatist boldly demands, "my hands in his side"—and gets what he asks for. Jesus doesn't criticize; instead he responds vulnerably, tenderly. So forget the rigid certainties; try doubt.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 2:19-22; John 20:24-29 (593). "You are citizens with the saints and . . . members of God's household."

Thursday, Jul 04, 2019

MASS FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

Freely believe

The Catechism of the Catholic Church devotes several pages to the topic of freedom, a concept Americans hold dear and celebrate today. Catholics embrace freedom as essential to the dignity of each human being, but not the idea of a "free for all"—rather, the common good holds weight. The best use of freedom is when, through our close connection to God, we freely choose goodness and righteousness. However you celebrate Independence Day, take a moment to consider your own freedom and how you exercise it.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 22:1b-19; Matthew 9:1-8 (380). "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Courage, child, your sins are forgiven.'"

Friday, Jul 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ANTHONY ZACCARIA, PRIEST

Go about doing good

Much of Jesus' ministry was made up of teaching, proclaiming the kingdom of God, and healing. He sent the disciples out to do the same. Anthony Zaccaria (1502-39), a doctor, followed this call. He founded a religious order and served the poor and sick. As disciples of Jesus today, we take up similar work: showing others our faith in the gospel, the Good News of Christ, by looking for opportunities to be a healing presence in the world around us.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 23:1-4, 19; 24:1-8, 62-67; Matthew 9:9-13 (381). "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Saturday, Jul 06, 2019

MEMORIAL OF MARIA GORETTI, VIRGIN, MARTYR

With God's grace, reconciliation is always possible

One of the marks of sanctity is that it inspires radical change in the lives of those who encounter it. Such was the case with Maria Goretti, murdered in 1902 by a would-be rapist when she was only 11 years old. She forgave her killer, Alessandro Serenelli, on her deathbed. Serenelli, however, was unrepentant until he had a dream in which Maria gave him lilies that immediately burned his hands. After his release from prison decades later, Serenelli visited Maria's mother and begged her forgiveness. They attended Mass together the next day, receiving Communion side by side. On June 24, 1950 the repentant Serenelli was present for Goretti's canonization. Change someone's life today through forgiveness.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 27:1-5, 15-29; Matthew 9:14-17 (382). "Jesus answered them, 'Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?'"

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



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