

Sunday, Aug 04, 2019

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Free yourself

The longer we own something, the stickier it becomes—in terms of its reverse-possession, that is. We all have items under beds or in boxes that don't come out of hiding, carried through countless moves yet never utilized. It could be that college guitar that's no longer strummed, canning equipment we always meant to master, gifts we don't want but feel obliged to keep, books we faintly hope to read one day. The longer things take up space, the more they seem to have a right to do so. Take a risk this week. Liberate yourself from a "legacy" possession.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23; Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11; Luke 12:13-21 (114). "And the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?"

Monday, Aug 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THE DEDICATION OF THE BASILICA OF MARY MAJOR

Stay close to Mother

The fourth-century Basilica of Mary Major is one of four basilicas in Rome that are recognized as the first centers of the church. It is the oldest and largest church in the world dedicated to the Blessed Mother. In fact, around the time it was consecrated in 434, there was debate about the nature of Mary's motherhood of Jesus, as some objected to her title "Mother of God." But believers won out and even took to the streets of Constantinople chanting the Greek word for it, *Theotokos*. How do you affirm her role in your own life?

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 11:4b-15; Matthew 14:13-21 (407). "Looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples."

Tuesday, Aug 06, 2019

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Be transformed

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain to pray. But it was not a typical prayer time for these friends as they watched Jesus' appearance change, saw him talk to the long-dead Moses and Elijah, and heard a voice from a cloud tell them to listen to the chosen Son. Whether this is a mystical experience, a symbolic story, or a misplaced Resurrection account is open to interpretation. It is clear that Jesus was unlike all others and they—and we—are to follow him. Today's memorial of Hiroshima provides the opportunity to "transfigure" our world through prayer and the practice of peace as we follow our Lord.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Luke 9:28b-36 (614). "While he was praying his face changed in appearance."

Wednesday, Aug 07, 2019

MEMORIAL OF SIXTUS II, POPE AND MARTYR

Where everyone belongs

Before his martyrdom in 258, Pope Sixtus II faced a leadership dilemma that Jesus had also faced during his public ministry. Who belonged in the fold of believers and who did not? For Sixtus, it wasn't a case of Canaanites versus Israel. It was a worldwide controversy over Baptism: whether those baptized by heretics could be welcomed as true Christians—or whether they needed to be re-baptized. The Asian and African church insisted on a do-over, while the Roman church said no. Sixtus upheld the Roman

view but mended fences with the other—allowing both. There's wisdom in the old hymn "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy." How wide is your own?

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 13:1-2, 25-14:1, 26-29a, 34-35; Matthew 15:21-28 (409). "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."

Thursday, Aug 08, 2019

MEMORIAL OF DOMINIC, PRIEST

We all need guidance at some time

A sect of Christian leaders in the south of France in the 13th century stumbled into gnostic and dualist heresy. The Cathars, as they were called, argued that human beings were inherently evil. Therefore, Jesus, the Son of God, couldn't possibly have been fully human. Dominic de Guzman, a Spanish priest, preached convincingly against the error. Sadly, when his efforts failed, church leaders followed with brutal suppression. As for Dominic, he focused on building up the Order of Preachers, known as the Dominicans, dedicated to preaching and praying the Rosary. Renowned for his holiness and eloquence, he was elevated to sainthood a mere 13 years after his death in 1221. Guiding the misguided was full-time work for Saint Dominic. What's your saintly work?

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 20:1-13; Matthew 16:13-23 (410). "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Friday, Aug 09, 2019

The good in group think

Today is International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the kind of new commemoration that tends to get overlooked. Catholics have a long and sometimes fraught history with native peoples, however, so we may want to give pause. Many aspects of indigenous culture fit snugly within a Christian worldview, particularly the emphasis on the group (Catholics call it the "common good") and on sharing available resources ("feed the hungry"). Learn one thing today about the native peoples from your corner of the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Matthew 16:24-28 (411). "What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"

Saturday, Aug 10, 2019

FEAST OF LAWRENCE, DEACON, MARTYR

Take nothing for granted

Often we take faith for granted, especially our ability to practice it freely. Today's feast reminds us that there have been times in our history when such was not the case. Lawrence, one of the most widely remembered martyrs of early Christian history, was killed on August 10, 258 when Emperor Valerian decreed all clerics be put to death. Lawrence lived a long time ago, and the stories about him—his care for the poor and his manner of death—come from an oral tradition that has inspired the faithful for generations. Say a prayer of thanks for the ability to practice your faith free of persecution.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; John 12:24-26 (618). "Unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground."

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



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