

Sunday, Aug 12, 2018

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Food for the road

We cherish those moments when nourishment comes as if heaven-sent. Trapped at our desks for the evening, someone thoughtfully orders take-out. When we're in mourning, caring neighbors drop off casseroles. We're tempted to graze self-pityingly on the cupboard's junk food, when a friend calls with an invitation to a real meal. Sometimes the sustenance isn't food at all, but warmth, comfort, understanding, or forgiveness. Angels are everywhere on duty, supplying what's needed in the world's dark corners. Is it your turn to be that angel? Who might be hungry today?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ephesians 4:30—5:2; John 6:41-51 (116). *"The angel ordered, 'Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!'"*

Monday, Aug 13, 2018

MEMORIAL OF PONTIAN, POPE, AND HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST, MARTYRS

Mom, what's an antipope?

When differences arise, popes, like family members, choose sides. In the third century, a Roman priest, Hippolytus, took exception to the teachings of the pope and gathered followers to his side. He was the first of what became known as the antipopes, those leaders who gained a significant following over and against legitimate popes. He lasted 10 years until, with new Pope Pontian in place, the Roman emperor had both Pontian and Hippolytus executed, just to make sure he got the right one. Tradition holds that the two were reconciled before they died and thus became today's martyr saints together. Conflict and betrayal are part of every human life, but reconciliation is the way of true faith. With whom can you reconcile today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 1:2-5, 24-28c; Matthew 17:22-27 (413). *"The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised."*

Tuesday, Aug 14, 2018

MEMORIAL OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST, MARTYR

A witness to the end

Franciscan Maximilian Kolbe is best known for the way he died: He offered his life in the Auschwitz Nazi death camp in exchange for another prisoner, a husband and father. But he led an incredibly active life before then. He founded a society for people consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (still in existence), a Franciscan community near Warsaw that in 12 years grew from 18 to 650 friars, and a publishing house that produced religious booklets and a newspaper and monthly magazine with circulations of 230,000 and more than 1 million respectively. He even established a missionary center in Nagasaki, Japan in 1930. His hard work reached its fulfillment in his martyrdom. Let the dedication of this saint serve as an example in your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 2:8—3:4; Matthew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14 (414). *"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

Wednesday, Aug 15, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

God is great!

Some Polish Americans still bring garden flowers to church today, what's left of a customary blessing of the harvest. It is the

time of killer tomatoes leaping off the vines and entirely too many zucchini, and such abundance can remind us that being just what you are, to the fullest, gives glory to God. Mary's Magnificat can be translated "My being magnifies the Lord," and as Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, "Just to be is a blessing." Your simple existence, let alone your bearing fruit that lasts, gives glory to the God of the harvest.

TODAY'S READINGS: Day: Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56 (622). *"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."*

Thursday, Aug 16, 2018

MEMORIAL OF STEPHEN OF HUNGARY

Advice for the Christian leader

Saint Stephen of Hungary (969-1038), king of the Magyars, gave the following advice to his son: "Be merciful to all who are suffering. . . . Be patient with everyone. . . . Be strong lest prosperity lift you up too much or adversity cast you down. . . . Be gentle so that you may never oppose justice. Be honorable so that you may never voluntarily bring disgrace upon anyone. All these virtues . . . make up the royal crown, and without them no one is fit to rule here on earth or attain the heavenly kingdom." In your leadership roles at home and work, commit to helping others feel the presence of Christ by living the virtues Stephen outlines.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 12:1-12; Matthew 18:21—19:1 (416). *"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?"*

Friday, Aug 17, 2018

Traveling mercies

If you have flown recently you probably have a gripe or two to add to the large pile of complaints of missing luggage, brusque employees, and long lines. But put it all in perspective: On this day in 1807 people were celebrating the first-ever commercial steamboat service, which carried passengers 150 miles—in 32 hours! Step back even further, when the first Christian disciples trekked for days, weeks, and months to bring the Good News to lands unknown. While we'd all appreciate a little less time in line and a little more leg room, make sure you're attentive to opportunities to be kind, generous, and gentle with your fellow passengers along the way. As the poet John Milton put it, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 16:1-15, 60, 63 or 16:59-63; Matthew 19:3-12 (417). *"I will remember the covenant I made with you."*

Saturday, Aug 18, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Stay mindful all week

According to the church's *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, the traditional Saturday memorial of Mary is a "remembrance of the maternal example and discipleship of the Blessed Virgin Mary," a "prelude and introduction to the celebration of Sunday," and a "sign that the Virgin Mary is continuously present and operative in the life of the church." It's tempting to compartmentalize religion to one day a week. The steadfastness of Mary is a reminder that religion belongs in your life every day.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 18:1-10, 13b, 30-32; Matthew 19:13-15 (418). *"Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

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



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