



SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2016

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Let me show you this picture!

In the “Age of the Selfie,” humility is rare. Really treasured is the snapshot that shows not just you alone, but someone famous with you. It’s not just you waving your cell phone saying, “Hey, look at me,” but, “See me standing next to this famous person!” as if their celebrity has rubbed off on you. Jesus doesn’t seem to get that: “When you are invited to a banquet . . . seek the lowest place.”

Worry less about your image and more about what God sees.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Sirach* 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; *Hebrews* 12:18-19, 22-24a; *Luke* 14:1, 7-14 (126). “Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God.”

MONDAY, AUGUST 29 MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST I am John

The “I am . . .” meme is familiar (some would say overused) on social media websites as a sign of solidarity with a person or group that is mistreated or worse. We express our solidarity, but from the safety and distance of our keyboard. When it comes to walking the walk, however, few respond as fully as John the Baptist. John was able to say “yes” totally and unconditionally to God’s call. His bold proclamation of the reign of God at hand cost him his life. None of us will ever do what John did, yet all of us are called to that same mission—proclaiming the reign of God in our words and our actions. Prepare the way!

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 2:1-5 (431); *Mark* 6:17-29 (634). “When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.”

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30 What about justice?

Some folks view religion as the rulebook. Do things God’s way or be sorry! Yet Saint Augustine wrote, “It is easier for God to hold back anger than mercy.” Rule-based souls will wonder: If God is merciful, what happens to justice? Pope Francis has an answer: “If God limited himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected. But mere justice is not enough. God does not deny justice. He rather envelopes it and surpasses it with an even greater event.” Mercy makes us bigger people!

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 2:10b-16; *Luke* 4:31-37 (432). “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God.”



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

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 Find hours in the day

Back-to-school season is in full swing, which means that for many people a change in schedule is in order. Not so for the church, though. For centuries, religious orders and clergy have kept time through a series of prayer periods throughout the day known as the Liturgy of the Hours, or Divine Office. This practice helps to structure the day around prayer. Be it Matins, Lauds, or Vespers, the Liturgy of the Hours reminds us that life is a constant dialogue of prayer. As the summer nears its end, perhaps now is a good time to renew prayer’s part in your daily schedule.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 3:1-9; *Luke* 4:38-44 (433). “For we are God’s co-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 Unburden yourself

Have you ever overpacked for a trip? Hauling too much luggage is never worth the hassle. Your Catholic faith demands you travel light through life. Too many material possessions can slow you down on your spiritual path, and the desire for accomplishment can sideline meaningful relationships. Emotional baggage, too, can turn you too far inward and away from a God-centered life. Jesus’ advice to his disciples to take nothing with them through the harsh desert required a great leap of faith on their part, and it is the same today. Jesus invites you to go on a real “trust walk.” But if you set down your things, your pretensions, and your worries, you’ll find you won’t need any of it to walk with him.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 3:18-23; *Luke* 5:1-11 (434). “They left everything and followed him.”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 Start anew

Not that long ago Catholics abstained from meat every Friday of the year. That rule changed in 1966 when U.S. Catholic bishops decided that economic and dietary times had changed so much that it was no longer a great sacrifice to have a meatless meal. The bishops said it was OK to go ahead and eat meat on Friday, but it still was important to do something sacrificial on Fridays as a way of keeping sacred the day of the week on which Christ died. Catholics heard the first part. But did we hear the part about volunteering, or fasting for peace, or visiting the sick every Friday? What practices would help you keep the spirit of Friday? Can you start today?

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 4:1-5; *Luke* 5:33-39 (435). “The new wine will burst the old wineskins.”

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 MEMORIAL OF GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH Take direction

Long before he became pope or “the Great,” Gregory just wanted to be a monk, and the three short years he spent in a monastery were the happiest of his life. But his abundant talents were needed elsewhere. An historian wrote: “It is impossible to conceive what would have been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the Middle Ages without the medieval papacy and . . . Gregory the Great.” Your life might not go as you planned, but be willing to take God’s detours, knowing that the path, although difficult, leads to your purpose.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians* 4:6b-15; *Luke* 6:1-5 (436). “The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”