

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2016**

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**We pray our faith**

Faith is lived. But it's also prayed. Today Catechetical Sunday considers the theme, "Prayer: the Faith Prayed." Perhaps the most distinguishing thing we Catholics do is gather to pray: at Mass and sacraments, the blessing before meals, the Liturgy of the Hours, or to share a Rosary. Prayer isn't always formal or complex. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux called prayer a surge of the heart, a simple look toward heaven. Saint Francis de Sales wittily declared, "Every one of us needs half an hour of prayer each day except when we're busy—then we need an hour." Renew your commitment to daily prayer.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:10-13 (135)*. "It is my wish, then, that in every place [the people] should pray, lifting up holy hands."

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19**

MEMORIAL OF JANUARIUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

**Halfway there**

Januarius, patron saint of Naples and a third-century bishop, was martyred during one of the persecutions of Christians common in the ancient Roman empire. Today, a cathedral in Naples contains a vial kept in a reliquary said to hold some of the saint's congealed blood. Three times a year the vial is removed and the blood liquefies. In March 2015 during Pope Francis' visit to Naples, the blood half liquefied when the pope kissed the reliquary. Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe of Naples declared, "The blood has half liquefied, which shows that Saint Januarius loves our pope and Naples." Pope Francis responded, "We can see the saint only half loves us. We must all spread the word, so that he loves us more!" Let's help spread the word!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Proverbs 3:27-34; Luke 8:16-18 (449)*. "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lamp stand, so that those who enter may see the light."

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20** MEMORIAL OF ANDREW KIN TAE-GON, PRIEST, AND PAUL CHONG HA-SANG, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS**Courage of convictions**

Martyrdom means bearing witness to the truth with one's death. There have been a multitude of Christians—from the first martyr Saint Stephen up to the present—who have been willing to die rather than give up their beliefs. Although most Christians aren't tested to the point of making this ultimate sacrifice, each still must choose to take up the cross and endure hardship and struggle. When faced with challenges, look to the martyrs for strength and support in keeping the faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13; Luke 8:19-21 (450)*. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it."

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21** FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST**The little we know is enough**

History has dimmed some of what we know about Matthew the Apostle. He may or may not have been the author of the gospel



that bears his name. Possibly he was called Levi. Probably he was martyred but we are not sure. And we do not know when he died or where he is buried. What we do know is that Matthew was one of the first apostles and before that, he had been a tax collector. Those two facts tell us that Jesus was not afraid to reach out to those who were looked down upon, the scorned and the outcasts. He calls those who are imperfect to come and follow him. So you and I have no excuse. We may feel we are not worthy, but we cannot hide behind that. All are called to follow.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643)*. "I have come to call, not the self-righteous, but sinners."

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22****Bedazzle the mundane**

To us, everyday life may sometimes feel mundane, but not to God. "It is possible that God says every morning, 'Do it again' to the sun; and every evening, 'Do it again' to the moon," G.K. Chesterton wrote. "It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them." Perhaps to God, all things are new—beautiful creations set to dazzle the world. Try to enter each day in the same mindset, ready for goodness and steeped in grace.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ecclesiastes 1:2-11; Luke 9:7-9 (452)*. "Even the thing of which we say, 'See, this is new!' has already existed in the ages that preceded us."

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23** MEMORIAL OF PIUS OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST**Believe the miracle of a tender heart**

Few American Catholics would recognize the name "Pius of Pietrelcina," but say "Padre Pio" and eyes light up with reverence. Given the name Pio (Pius) when he became a Capuchin Franciscan, he is often venerated as having the sacred stigmata, the marks of Jesus' Passion on his own body. The church maintains neutrality over miraculous signs, but there is no argument over Padre Pio's kindness, compassion, and mercy—all for the love of Christ. Such compassion is a genuine miracle in our times, when all of us are wounded—not by the marks of Christ, but by hardness of heart. Perform a miracle today—soften your heart.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Luke 9:18-22 (453)*. "But who do you say that I am?"

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24** MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**Maternal mediator**

Mary, the mother of God, the mother of the church, the mother of all living—your mother—like any good mother, is on her children's side. She intercedes on your behalf to bring you to the gifts of salvation. There are many Marian prayers to choose from: the Hail Mary, the Memorare, or say a whole Rosary. Call upon her by her many titles—Blessed Virgin, Queen of Heaven—or speak to her simply from the heart. No matter what, she's always there. Go ahead and honor her. Let her lead you to her son.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8; Luke 9:43b-45 (454)*. "They were all amazed at his every deed."



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

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