

Sunday, Sep 22, 2019

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Who's the boss?

A parish secretary worked at an urban church with five resident priests. One priest was retired, two had ministries elsewhere, and two were actively engaged in the parish itself. The secretary worked for all five men, handling incoming calls and written correspondence, crafting bulletins, running errands, even sewing the occasional loose button or laundering a stained sweater. No matter whose task she performed first, she never escaped the charge of favoritism, because anything more than one boss doesn't work. If Jesus is our Lord, everything and everybody else takes a backseat.

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13 (135). "No servant can serve two masters."

Monday, Sep 23, 2019

MEMORIAL OF PIUS OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST

Mark his words

Padre Pio was a popular but controversial figure during his lifetime and has remained so since his death in 1968. He is said to have exhibited signs of the stigmata (visible wounds on his hands echoing Jesus' wounds on the cross). Some believed they were real, others were skeptical, including several popes who isolated him and had medical examiners weigh in. Whatever the case, his advice for living a faithful life rings true: "living humbly, being disinterested, prudent, just, patient, kind, chaste, meek, diligent, carrying out one's duties for no other reason than that of pleasing God, and receiving from Him alone the reward one deserves." Let that advice be the mark of your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 1:1-6; Luke 8:16-18 (449). "No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed."

Tuesday, Sep 24, 2019

May we have a word?

Church leaders have chosen scripture passages to be read in private and proclaimed publicly at Mass every day of the year. A daughter in Illinois, a cousin in England, friends in El Salvador, the pope in Rome, and the guest at a Catholic Worker House—every Catholic involved in a liturgy is reading or hearing these same scripture passages. The church strongly encourages us to read from the Bible and promises that the Holy Spirit will give a "spiritual understanding of the word to those who read it." Read today's scripture passages and ask for the grace of one small insight.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20; Luke 8:19-21 (450). "My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it."

Wednesday, Sep 25, 2019

Gather us in

It's no accident that Jesus chose 12 apostles. Calling together his first 12 followers symbolized the reuniting of the 12 tribes of Israel that God chose to be a light to the world, the 12 tribes that had camped in the wilderness with the Tabernacle at the center, the 12 tribes that had then disastrously dispersed. In fact, all of

Jesus' ministry would be an invitation for all kinds of people to come together and rejoin the fold—the healed leper could now live with his family again, the woman at the well could be the town hero instead of a pariah. How will you honor the Good Shepherd, who gathers people together instead of driving them apart?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 9:5-9; Luke 9:1-6 (451). "He summoned the Twelve."

Thursday, Sep 26, 2019

MEMORIAL OF COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MARTYRS

Have a sterling reputation

The details of their lives are lost in antiquity, but the early martyrs and reputed twin brothers Cosmas and Damian apparently were skilled medics and are revered for having offered medical care without charge. They were called the *Anargyrio*, Greek for "the silverless ones." Acting in this way, they are said to have attracted many to the Christian life. You, too, can evangelize simply by doing what you are good at with a Christian spirit. Whatever your calling in life, carry out your duties in such a way as to be an inspiration to others. That is the best evangelization!

TODAY'S READINGS: Haggai 1:1-8; Luke 9:7-9 (452). "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways!"

Friday, Sep 27, 2019

MEMORIAL OF VINCENT DE PAUL, PRIEST

From poverty to true wealth

"Three hots and a cot." That motive, which draws some from poverty into priesthood, applied initially to Saint Vincent. A social climber, his father's muddy shoes embarrassed him when Dad visited the seminary. Consider his transformation by grace: Once he left hobnobbing with the wealthy behind, Vincent founded a congregation to educate priests, as well as hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the mentally ill. He founded the Daughters of Charity with Louise de Marillac and revolutionized convents, making their cloister the "streets of the city." Pray Vincent's dying prayer until it's yours: "We have done what you commanded, do now what you have promised."

TODAY'S READINGS: Haggai 2:1-9; Luke 9:18-22 (453). "Jesus was praying in solitude."

Saturday, Sep 28, 2019

MEMORIAL OF WENCESLAUS, MARTYR

Stand up for what is right

The upbeat tune to the Christmas carol "Good King Wenceslaus" belies the violent tragedy of the life of Wenceslaus I, duke of Bohemia. His mother murdered his grandmother to seize control, and Wenceslaus was then murdered by his brother. Both victims died defending the Christian faith. Political unrest has always been a reality, and Wenceslaus is a role model for taking a public stand for what's right even when under enormous threat. Find in him the courage to take the high road in our tumultuous times.

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a; Luke 9:43b-45 (454). "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men."

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



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