

Sunday, Nov 11, 2018

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Generosity, redefined

Many are shocked at the idea of biblical tithing. Give 10 percent—*10 percent!*—of our resources to the Lord? Who would do this? Yet some Christians do it as a matter of course. No statistics indicate that anyone ever died of tithing—or of generosity exercised on any scale. The gospel doesn't follow the widow who put her whole livelihood into the temple treasury after her signature gesture of trust. Yet we're led to believe God will care for her with the same extravagance that she shows. The best counsel on generosity remains: give until it scares you.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 17:10-16; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44 or 12:41-44 (155). *"But she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had."*

Monday, Nov 12, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JOSAPHAT, BISHOP, MARTYR

Those "onion-capped" churches

Josaphat, a 17th-century bishop, dedicated his life to bringing together the Ukrainian and Roman churches, a reminder of how much remains undone some 400 years later and more than 50 years since our last ecumenical council. We remember today our *catholicism*, our universalness, because the Eastern Catholic communities, as Father Richard McBrien points out, are "distinct churches, not just 'rites.'" In our Western view, the rituals of the Eastern Churches may seem exotic and mysterious, but we are drawn to brothers and sisters not because of the splendor or beauty of their liturgy but because of our oneness in Christ, something Josaphat deemed worth dying for.

TODAY'S READINGS: Titus 1:1-9; Luke 17:1-6 (491). *"If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."*

Tuesday, Nov 13, 2018

MEMORIAL OF FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI, VIRGIN

Bloom where you are planted

When you were young, was there something you wanted more than anything else? As the youngest of 13 children, the girl who would become known as Mother Cabrini (1850-1917) dreamed wild dreams. Her greatest desire was to be a missionary in China, which did not please her parents. They steered her into teaching. After their deaths, Frances started a congregation of missionaries and again thought of China. The pope had other plans; he directed her to the United States. Frances never got to China, but she did a lot of good for children and the sick wherever she went. Wherever you are, make the most of it.

TODAY'S READINGS: Titus 2:1-8, 11-14; Luke 17:7-10 (492). *"Turn from evil and do good, that you may abide forever."*

Wednesday, Nov 14, 2018

Thanks for everything

Many of us have probably learned that there are four basic kinds of prayer: praise, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving, but the last seems to be at the heart of it all. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that "every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving." Saint Paul says: "Give thanks in all circumstances." And the poet e. e. cummings—quirky syntax and all—brings thanks and praise together when he says: "i thank You God for most this amazing / day: for the leaping greenly

spirits of trees / and a true blue dream of sky; and for everything / which is natural which is infinite which is yes."

TODAY'S READINGS: Titus 3:1-7; Luke 17:11-19 (493). *"Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"*

Thursday, Nov 15, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ALBERT THE GREAT, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Who's learning from you?

Sometimes we find virtue in unexpected places. In Saint Albert's day (c. 1200-80), Christians had been distancing themselves from pagan traditions and philosophers for centuries. So when he began using the work of the Greek thinker Aristotle to explain Christian theology, he scandalized his fellow Christians. Over time, though, the church accepted the "pagan" work of Albert and his student, a fellow named Thomas Aquinas, as foundations for understanding the faith. When Christ cured 10 lepers, he found it was the lowly, foreign Samaritan whose faith was the strongest. Are we too quick to dismiss people and their beliefs because they seem different from ours?

TODAY'S READINGS: Philemon 7-20; Luke 17:20-25 (494). *"The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it."*

Friday, Nov 16, 2018

MEMORIAL OF MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

Develop your survival skills

There are a number of parallels between the saints the church remembers today and tomorrow, Margaret of Scotland and Elizabeth of Hungary, respectively. They were members of the nobility who entered into arranged political marriages that turned into love matches, where their holiness rubbed off on their spouses. And both were survivors, losing their husbands to war and disease but moving forward to continue their work of service to the poor and the church. Through the twists and turns of life they stuck with their commitments with energy and spirit. Are you doing the same?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 John 4-9; Luke 17:26-37 (495). *"Let us love one another. For this is love, that we walk according to his commandments."*

Saturday, Nov 17, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, RELIGIOUS

Look, up in the sky!

When we're children and hear the gospel about "losing your life" for the sake of another, we imagine jumping in front of a loved one to take a bullet meant for them, or some other equally magnificent act of a superhero. But maturity teaches us that true greatness is found in smaller, quieter acts of heroism. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-31) was a woman of privilege thanks to an arranged marriage into a royal family, and she likely could have lived a long and privileged life if she had so chosen. Instead, she devoted every waking moment to helping the poor and the ill, regularly putting the riches of her royal family at the disposal of those less fortunate. Elizabeth died at the tender age of 24, likely from serving those stricken by an epidemic. But she remains a true superhero and model for any of us who strive to "lose our life" for others.

TODAY'S READINGS: 3 John 5-8; Luke 18:1-8 (496). *"Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?"*

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



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