

## Sunday, Aug 02, 2020

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### The glass is still half empty

August is National Water Quality Month, which may not sound exciting, or even like a religious issue. Yet the sacred character of water is attested from the Creation story, in which God's Spirit hovers over the waters, during the corrective flood in Noah's time, at the Red Sea's freedom crossing, up to the cleansing sign of Baptism. Isaiah issues the divine invitation: Come to the water! But what if that water is risky to drink, as it is for some of our nation's citizens and a sizeable percentage of the world population? Support clean water projects, because water is life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:1-3; Romans 8:35, 37-39; Matthew 14:13-21 (112). *"Thus says the LORD: All you who are thirsty, come to the water!"*

## Monday, Aug 03, 2020

### A port for any storm

Jesus' mother Mary has many titles—one of them is Our Lady, Star of the Sea. Under this name, she is a protector of seafarers. But Mary is a guiding star for all of us as we seek her son through the storms of life. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux wrote: "If the winds of temptation arise; if you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary. If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary." Don't lose sight of her, and you won't lose your way to Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 28:1-17 (407); Matthew 14:22-36 (408). *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."*

## Tuesday, Aug 04, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

### Come to the curer of souls

Most male Catholic saints were priests. Some were priests whose great intellect sparked important theological concepts. Others traveled to exotic places to teach about Christ. Still others died as courageous martyrs. But the French saint John Vianney—commonly known as the Curé of Ars—became a saint simply by being an ordinary, but extraordinarily dedicated, parish priest. In French, the word *curé* means "pastor," or one who is "charged with the care of souls." Vianney cared for thousands of souls who sought spiritual healing in the confessional, where he spent up to 16 hours a day. Seek ordinary ways to be holy today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; Matthew 14:22-36 or 15:1-2, 10-14 (408). *"People brought to him all those who were sick."*

## Wednesday, Aug 05, 2020

MEMORIAL OF THE DEDICATION OF THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY MAJOR

### The Word made flesh set in stone

How many papal basilicas are there in Rome? St. Peter's gets primary attention, but actually there are three more, each with its own rich history, including St. Paul Outside the Walls and St. John Lateran. The one whose dedication we celebrate today, St. Mary Major (Santa Maria Maggiore) pays homage to Mary our mother and her role in the life of her son. Pope Sixtus III built this basilica after the Council of Ephesus (431) decreed that Mary is the mother of God incarnate (*Theotokos*). The theology is important. Once again, the church makes clear that Jesus was

both divine and human. Thus, we believe in the sacredness of human life, and we look to Mary's unflinching love, as God-bearer and first disciple, for inspiration.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 31:1-7; Matthew 15:21-28 (409). *"With age-old love, I have loved you."*

## Thursday, Aug 06, 2020

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

### Shining like the sun

The story of Jesus' Transfiguration is important enough to be part of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's gospels, and the Feast of the Transfiguration has been celebrated since the ninth century and officially on the Roman Catholic calendar since the mid-15th century. This emphasis points toward our deep human longing for transcendence, for a glimpse of divine light such as that experienced by Peter, James, and John. What can you do today to open yourself up to Jesus' light? Perhaps pray for the gift of perception, of receptivity to God's presence.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Matthew 17:1-9 (614). *"And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light."*

## Friday, Aug 07, 2020

MEMORIAL OF CAJETAN, PRIEST

### Faith takes courage

Since the first followers of Jesus, the church has had its struggles, but always, the Holy Spirit keeps the church faithful. Courageous people in every age rise up to lead renewal within the church. In the early 1500s, that person was Cajetan, who felt the pain of the Body of Christ and dedicated himself to doing something about it. With friends, he founded a group of clergy dedicated to trusting in God's providence and claiming no property nor money from the people—the opposite of clergy at the time who were becoming wealthy off the backs of the people. In time, the same church that Cajetan sought to reform recognized him as a saint. Who are the courageous ones in your life who help you stay faithful? Draw strength from them to help institute necessary reforms in our time.

TODAY'S READINGS: Nahum 2:1, 3; 3:1-3, 6-7; Matthew 16:24-28 (411). *"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny [themselves], take up [their] cross, and follow me."*

## Saturday, Aug 08, 2020

MEMORIAL OF DOMINIC, PRIEST

### Listening is the first step in preaching

Into a 13th-century world where few knew basic theology, and wealthy, mediocre preachers traveled with retinues, Dominic brought dramatic change. He encouraged his friars to study the essentials of the faith, preach eloquently, live simply on what they could beg, and leave enclosed monasteries to reach out to people where they saw the need. By putting himself amid people, Dominic found opportunities to brilliantly counter the Albigensian heresy, a popular dualism that saw spirit as good, matter as evil, and denied the Incarnation. Take time to hear what others are saying so that you are sure to respond as Dominic did with the gospel of love that promotes the dignity of all.

TODAY'S READINGS: Habakkuk 1:12—2:4; Matthew 17:14-20 (412). *"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed . . . nothing will be impossible for you."*

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



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