

Sunday, May 16, 2021

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Good things come from unlikely places

It may bring a smile to our lips to hear the argument for why we're obliged to love others: because God loves us first. And if God can love us (be honest here!) then clearly love need not be earned. This World Communications Day, Pope Francis invites us to consider how future-apostle Nathaniel once dismissed Jesus because of his origins: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" To really love people, we have to begin by not categorizing them: by gender or race, nationality or religion, native language or political party. Even Nazareth holds surprises!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26; 1 John 4:11-16; John 17:11b-19 (60). *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another."*

Monday, May 17, 2021

EASTER WEEKDAY

Solitude and solidarity

Many have experienced more solitude than they care for during the pandemic, but it'd be a shame to lose the lessons of the experience once it's over. Catholics have a strong tradition of finding the sacred in solitude. The monastic life, for example, is all about withdrawing from society to draw closer to God and ultimately to each other. Turning inward is an opportunity for growth. Ritualizing the routines of life—in the midst of grief and stress and fear—helps to maintain inner stability and clarity. At the same time, far too many haven't had the luxury of solitude to remove themselves from danger—let this fact light a fire in all of us to fight for justice for those who have risked all to serve society this past year.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 19:1-8; John 16:29-33 (297). *"I am not alone, because the Father is with me."*

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOHN I, POPE, MARTYR

Define your terms

In 2011, the Nicene Creed in English changed from the poetic-but-imprecise "one in being"—recited at Mass for more than 40 years—back to a seemingly unusual, clunky Latin word: *consubstantial*. We learned that *consubstantial* was a critical distinction hammered out at various church councils to clarify that Jesus was divinely co-eternal with God. It was a pronouncement specifically designed to refute the Arian heresy that denied Christ's divinity. The struggle against Arianism cost Pope John I his life in 526. Words matter. Take time to choose the right ones.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 20:17-27; John 17:1-11a (298). *"Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began."*

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

EASTER WEEKDAY

Going home

Final farewells are difficult. While there can be grace in the chance to express love and gratitude, there also can be great pain at the thought of never again seeing a face, touching a hand, hearing a voice. There is true heartache in accepting that there will be no more shared meals, meaningful discussions, shared futures planned together as we surrender the companionship of a loved one. It is a bittersweet time because the grief of anticipated loss is

proof of an equally deep love. Yet it is not the end—faith promises us more. On this Easter Wednesday, with trust in the promise of new life, give thanks to God for someone whose love and faithfulness has enriched your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 20:28-38; John 17:11b-19 (299). *"They were all weeping loudly . . . for they were deeply distressed that (Paul) had said that they would never see his face again."*

Thursday, May 20, 2021

MEMORIAL OF BERNARDINE OF SIENA, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS, MISSIONARY

History will be our judge

Church history is filled with admirable figures who stand out for their tender love and compassion. Bernardine of Siena was not that kind of saint. A fire-and-brimstone preacher with a moralizing temperament, he encouraged "bonfires of the vanities" where townsfolk pitched household items suggestive of luxury or leisure—mirrors, perfumes, games—into the fire. Seen from our vantage point, many of his sermons had antisemitic, misogynistic, and homophobic overtones. Though a commanding preacher who lived a life of devotion, Bernardine—like all of us—was a product of his times, limited by the pastoral and theological perspectives handed down to him. His innovations in vernacular preaching continue to inspire, yet his limitations in compassion and inclusion serve as a cautionary tale. None of us has a monopoly on moral purity. Kindness and compassion, however, never go out of style.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11; John 17:20-26 (300). *"And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one."*

Friday, May 21, 2021

MEMORIAL OF CHRISTOPHER MAGALLANES, PRIEST, MARTYR, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Live fully

Each of us is called to give our lives fully on behalf of our love for and commitment to God. Most of us will not die a martyr's death, but some of us will. Christopher Magallanes was one such person. Christopher's call to be a martyr was lived every day through his prayer and ministry as a priest: founding schools, providing work opportunities, and even constructing a dam to help the people. He was killed because of his love for the people, a love emanating from his deep faith. How does our faith inspire us to give of ourselves fully?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 25:13b-21; John 21:15-19 (301). *"Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'"*

Saturday, May 22, 2021

MEMORIAL OF RITA OF CASCIA, RELIGIOUS

Hope is a perennial

We all could use a friend like Saint Rita of Cascia. Wed against her will at the tender age of 12, she somehow survived abuse and family feuds to become a reconciling force in a violent region of 15th-century Italy. She has acquired a following, along with Saint Jude, as the patron of hopeless causes. On her deathbed, it is said she asked for a rose from her garden. Though it was winter, we are told a single blooming rose was found and brought to her. Never lose hope—no cause is hopeless!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; John 21:20-25 (302). *"There are also many other things that Jesus did."*

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



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