

Sunday, Jan 21, 2018

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

It's not the end of the world

If there's one thing we can use less of, it's negative attitudes. After a brief perusal of daily headlines, we might be forgiven for thinking that the next six wars are preloaded, our food supply is toxic, strangers may be killers, and all leaders are liars. Yet our sacred story declares that human hearts can change. The future can be anything we want it to be. All we have to do is choose. Decide today to walk the road of hope.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20 (68). *"Jonah began his journey . . . announcing, 'Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed.'"*

Monday, Jan 22, 2018

Change is gonna come

Those first disciples called by Jesus "immediately" left everything and followed him. Often we're inspired by a Sunday sermon or something we read in the paper or hear on the news. Then we feel the need to change our lives in some way in order to become better people. Yet change is hard when so much holds us in place: our families, our jobs—all our responsibilities. Yet there is always a need to leave something behind in order to gain something better. What must you let go of today in order to answer the Lord's call to fulfillment?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10; Mark 3:22-30 (317). *"Jesus said, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him."*

Tuesday, Jan 23, 2018

MEMORIAL OF MARIANNE COPE, VIRGIN

Follow an inspiring example

Many of us have heard of Father Damien, famous for his work with those with leprosy, but Sister Marianne Cope, at the age of 45 likewise volunteered for the Hawaiian mission at Molokai. She served girls and women with leprosy, emphasizing "pride and fun" and dignity in the colony. Soon after her death, a local woman wrote in the *Honolulu Advertiser* that she was "a woman [who devoted] every hour of 30 years to the mothering of people isolated by law from the rest of the world. She risked her own life in all that time, faced everything with unflinching courage, and smiled sweetly through it all." Who can you help today, right at home, to see beyond the harshness of life?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 6:12b-15, 17-19; Mark 3:31-35 (318). *"Who are my mother and my brothers?"*

Wednesday, Jan 24, 2018

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Be the retiring type

Saint Francis de Sales (1567-1622) led a full life, both before and after his relatively late decision to join the priesthood. In his era, a life of holiness was considered the domain of monks and nuns, certainly not of laypeople. But he believed God could and should be found in everyday life and was one of the first great religious teachers to offer spiritual direction to lay Catholics living and working in the world, such as in his book *Introduction to the Devout Life*. His advice to those busy with the world's affairs is as valid today as it was then: "Retire at various times into the solitude of your own heart, even while outwardly engaged in

discussions or transactions with others, and talk to God." Practice a little "early retirement" today!

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:4-17; Mark 4:1-20 (319). *"Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear."*

Thursday, Jan 25, 2018

FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE

The impossible is possible

Have you or someone you know ever experienced a conversion? Conversion can take many forms. Someone turns their life around—recovering from an addiction, bouncing back from an illness or a setback and going at life in a whole new way. The amazing thing about Saint Paul's conversion was that he went from persecutor of Christians to a devout Christian himself. The change in him was so incredible not everyone believed it at first. How could this person who was out to imprison and kill Christians suddenly be one of them? For God all things are possible. With God's help, that makes a lot of things possible for us, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 22:3-16 or 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18 (519). *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"*

Friday, Jan 26, 2018

MEMORIAL OF TIMOTHY AND TITUS, BISHOPS

Be a living example

Timothy and Titus were companions and coworkers of the apostle Paul. We call them bishops because Christian tradition sees them as the first leaders of the churches in Ephesus (Greece) and Crete. They carried the gospel to the world in the earliest days of the church. They show us that the best way for our faith to live and grow is to live it. All Christians, not only leaders, bear a responsibility to take part in the mission of the church. To spread the faith, make yourself a living example of it.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 1:1-8 OR Titus 1:1-5; Mark 4:26-34 (520; Gospel 321). *"To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it?"*

Saturday, Jan 27, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANGELA MERICI, VIRGIN, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

Share and share alike

Saint Angela Merici didn't set out to form a typical religious community of women. An orphan herself, she began by simply giving religious instruction to the poor and uneducated children of her neighbors. Before long, other women were attracted to join her. By the time she was 50, prompted by a heavenly vision, she began a community of women called the Ursulines who embraced virginity, poverty, and obedience. But they took no formal vows. They didn't formally congregate as a religious community, either, but stayed at home to evangelize to their family, friends, and neighbors. Evangelism can begin with even the tiniest seed. With whom will you share a bit of the Good News today?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17; Mark 4:35-41 (322). *"Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?"*

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



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