

Sunday, Feb 10, 2019

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

An invitation to go deeper

Who's willing to embrace a calling that requires boundless courage, oceans of trust, the skills of a diplomat, and the capacity to forgive 70 times seven times—weekly? That calling is marriage, which we celebrate this World Marriage Day. A brief romance can be like doggy-paddling around the matter of commitment before getting out and toweling off, whereas getting married is like diving into the deep end of the pool of love. We have to be all in, knot-tied and fortunes joined, before the genuine work of love can begin. Take time to salute the boldly married today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11 (75). *"Put out into deep water, and lower your nets for a catch."*

Monday, Feb 11, 2019

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

United in compassion

Today is World Day of the Sick, a feast day instituted in 1992 by Pope John Paul II, shortly after he himself was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. He chose this date to coincide with the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, who is said to have appeared to a peasant girl in a small town in France. Millions of pilgrims have since gone there to seek healing and comfort in its waters. Join with all believers today in prayer for those struggling with illness, and offer up your own suffering in union with Christ on the cross.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:1-19; Mark 6:53-56 (329). *"They laid the sick in the marketplace."*

Tuesday, Feb 12, 2019

Give it your all

Jesus had a lot of criticism for hypocritical Pharisees, who followed the letter but not the spirit of the law. Going through the motions won't cut it with Christ! But he understands, too, that following him can't possibly be a sustained spiritual high—there are periods of dryness and things to be learned from those, too. Enlivening your relationship with God takes effort. There are lots of tools for shaking up your routine: volunteer, join a Bible study group, make a votive offering, or even go on a pilgrimage to a holy site. And whatever you do, put your heart into it!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:20—2:4a; Mark 7:1-13 (330). *"You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition."*

Wednesday, Feb 13, 2019

Heartfelt reflections

In his book *Immortal Diamond*, Franciscan friar Richard Rohr suggests moving your negative thinking "from your head to your heart." When you feel animosity toward someone, he says, imagine them literally inside your beating heart, surrounded by your flowing blood, until it's impossible for you to remain antagonistic. "Do it in an almost physical sense, and you will see how calmly and quickly it works," he says. "Now the Sacred Heart [of Jesus] and the Immaculate Heart [of Mary] have been

transferred to you. . . . The 'sacred heart' is then your heart, too."

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17; Mark 7:14-23 (331). *"The things that come out from within are what defile."*

Thursday, Feb 14, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP

Be a loving sibling

Many Bible stories about brothers take a bad turn. Think Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and, well, everybody. Other brothers fare better: Peter and Andrew, or Zebedee's inseparable sons James and John. In the lives of the saints, siblings often turn out to be allies. Take these two ninth-century brothers of Thessalonica in Greece: Cyril was the brilliant one, and Methodius the contemplative. That could have caused conflict, but it didn't. Cyril went to the missions in Slovenia, inventing the "Cyrillic" alphabet to assist his new flock in learning their faith. Methodius joined him later and carried on the work after Cyril's death. Send your sibling—or a spiritual brother or sister—a Valentine's note!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 7:24-30 (332). *"He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first.'"*

Friday, Feb 15, 2019

Chew your food thoughtfully

"Knowledge is power," said Ben Franklin. The serpent said the same thing to Eve, and she bought it. Although knowledge often does give us access to power, it doesn't guarantee us wisdom. An attribute of God, wisdom is acquired only through the indwelling Holy Spirit. In the Bible knowledge is imagined sometimes as tantalizing fruit dangling from a forbidden tree. Wisdom, however, sets a lavish table at which her guests may dine by accepting her invitation. When faced with the choice between fast food and fine dining, take the opportunity to savor the meal that lasts to eternity.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:1-8; Mark 7:31-37 (333). *"But the serpent said to the woman, 'God knows well that the moment you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods.'"*

Saturday, Feb 16, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Don't leave hungry

Some folks will always set out food when you visit their homes no matter what time of day it is. If you're smart you learn to drop by when you're good and hungry! Jesus never let anyone walk away hungry either—even if it meant setting the table for 5,000. His mother foretold that fact in her great song, the Magnificat: "He has filled the hungry with good things." When tired of the junk food the world has to offer, pray Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:47-55) in faith that God will fill you with good things.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-24; Mark 8:1-10 (334). *"If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way."*

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



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