

## SUNDAY, MAY 8, 2016

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### Mother knows best

This year Mother's Day and World Communications Day both fall on today's date. The latter was established by the Second Vatican Council to focus on the evangelical potential of modern means of information exchange. Important to be sure, but our Mother Mary, like most mothers, communicates with her children in more personal (albeit, in her case, extraordinary) ways. And what does she say when she appears? Her messages can be summarized simply: Pray and be healed. Amid the information bombardment of today's digital age, stop and listen to Mary and heed her loving command.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 7:55-60; *Revelation* 22:12-14, 16-17, 20; *John* 17:20-26 (61). "The world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me."

## MONDAY, MAY 9 EASTER WEEKDAY

### The pain of exile is all around us

The great Italian poet Dante Alighieri was born on this day in 1265. His *Divine Comedy* is considered one of the great works of world literature. Deeply involved in the political strife of medieval Florence, Dante was forced into exile and wrote of the bitterness of the experience, in lines that speak to anyone who has been forced to flee homeland and loved ones. Read them in solidarity with the millions who are living in exile in our war-torn times: "You shall leave everything you love most, this is the arrow that the bow of exile shoots first. You are to know the bitter taste of others' bread, how salty it is, and know how hard a path it is for one who goes ascending and descending others' stairs . . ."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 19:1-8; *John* 16:29-33 (297). "In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world."

## TUESDAY, MAY 10 FEAST OF DAMIEN DE VEUSTER, PRIEST

### Be greater than your limitations

His brother Pamphile was the big shot: older, brilliant, slated for greatness in the mission fields. But when Pamphile fell ill at the time the Sacred Hearts were sending priests to the Hawaiian missions, the younger Damien volunteered to take his place. No one put much confidence in Damien, who had no brain for book-learning, questionable social skills, and no patience at all with authority. What Damien did among those afflicted with leprosy at Molokai far outweighed any of his limitations. Let your love be bigger than your limitations!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 20:17-27; *John* 17:1-11a (298). "Compelled by the Holy Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem. What will happen to me there I do not know."

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 11 EASTER WEEKDAY

### This thing could go either way

Saint Augustine wrote that we humans are "like a horse, with either God or the devil as rider." That's a rather colorful way to describe the struggle we all encounter as we try to do the right thing but slip up regularly and can take a hard fall if we are not alert in our spiritual life and self-control. We are pleasure-seeking,



THE VIRGIN MARY IN PRAYER, ALBRECHT DURER (1518)

pain-avoiding creatures, but it's easy to confuse cheap diversion for true wellness. Who's holding the reins in your own life? If you're being taken for a ride you'd rather not go on, now is the time to buck up!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 20:28-38; *John* 17:11b-19 (299). "I guarded them, and none of them was lost except the son of destruction."

## THURSDAY, MAY 12

FEAST OF NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS

### Study war no more

The carnage of war and the horrors of mass atrocities would not be possible if the foot soldiers of the world, *en masse*, refused to carry out orders. Easier said than done, as soldiers are constrained by powerful systems that force them to follow orders or face lethal consequences. Few of us would have the courage to resist in such a situation. Nereus and Achilles did. After participating in cruel persecutions of early Christians they threw down their weapons even though they knew

the fate that awaited them. Say a prayer of thanks for courageous acts of faith and be a "warrior for love."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 22:30; 23:6-11; *John* 17:20-26 (300). "I made known to them your name . . . that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

## FRIDAY, MAY 13 FEAST OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

### Ask Mary

On May 13, 1917, in the midst of war-torn Europe, three local children reported that a beautiful lady appeared to them in their hometown of Fatima, Portugal. They reported that she asked the children to pray the rosary each day and to honor her Immaculate Heart. In time, the church agreed with the children that the Blessed Virgin Mary indeed had appeared. To this day, thousands journey to Fatima to seek Mary's counsel and help. In May 2010, Pope Benedict XVI prayed at the church of Our Lady of Fatima "as a homage of gratitude . . . for the marvels that the Almighty has worked through you in the hearts of so many who come as pilgrims to this your maternal home." Today is a day to say Mary's prayer, the rosary, to ask for God's peace.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 25:13b-21; *John* 21:15-19 (301). "When Jesus manifested himself to his disciples . . . he said, 'Feed my lambs.'"

## SATURDAY, MAY 14 FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

### Bake a "cake" for an apostle

Saint Matthias was the apostle chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot. An idea for his feast—especially with children—might be to read today's brief account in Acts and then bake some cookies! Find out Matthias' symbols—he is a patron saint of carpenters and tailors—or use symbols of his martyrdom such as a spear or sword. Using a basic gingerbread cookie recipe, allow the kids to shape the cookies into those symbols. He is also patron of those struggling with an addiction. For anyone in this category, instead of (or in addition to!) a cookie, extend a phone call, card, or word of support.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts* 1:15-17, 20-26; *John* 15:9-17 (564). "I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete."



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

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