

Sunday, May 19, 2019

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Life is hard—find a community!

Moving day is proof positive that we could all use some friends. Who else is going to lift the other end of that piano? But the rewards of community go beyond bearing the physical burden. We need folks to celebrate the victories, cheer us on during the contests, hold onto us when the bad news comes, and weep with us when we grieve. We also need encouragement and challenge to do the right thing even when it's hard or costly, and to shine a light when the path ahead is dark. Welcome to the church.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 14:21-27; Revelation 21:1-5a; John 13:31-33a, 34-35 (54). *"They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere."*

Monday, May 20, 2019

MEMORIAL OF BERNARDINE OF SIENA, PRIEST

It's good to evolve

Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444) was known as a gifted preacher. But many of his sermons were polemics against Jews and homosexual peoples. The cultural, political, and religious context of his time gave tacit approval to such invective. But Catholic thinking today has evolved. The catechism now teaches that people with same-sex attraction "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity" (#2358). And, according to the catechism, the church "enjoys a link" with the Jewish people, the "first to hear the word of God" (#839). Do you hold assumptions about others that need to be reexamined?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26 (285). *"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything."*

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CHRISTOPHER MAGALLANES, PRIEST, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Dying to find a better way

Christopher Magallanes was a priest in Mexico during a difficult time in Mexican history. On the heels of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17, the Catholic Church and the Mexican state were at loggerheads. Magallanes wrote and preached against armed rebellion but was falsely accused of promoting armed uprising during what came to be called the Cristero Rebellion. Arrested in 1927 on his way to celebrate Mass, he gave his few possessions—as well as absolution—to his executioners. His last words were, "I die innocent and ask God that my blood may serve to unite my Mexican brethren." Since 1929 church and state in Mexico have by and large avoided further violent conflict and are on much better terms than in the past. Pray for peaceful resolutions to conflicts in the world today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a (286). *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."*

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

MEMORIAL OF RITA OF CASCIA, RELIGIOUS

Persist in your faith

Margarita was the only child of a late 14th-century Italian couple. Rita, as she was known, was a 12-year-old bride to a difficult husband, the mother of two sons, and an early widow whose husband was killed in a violent vendetta. Upon the later deaths of her sons, Rita entered the Augustinian monastery in her

hometown of Cascia. Biographers write of her having been a persistent woman of faith who refused to give up a dream of monastic life as well as a peacemaker who reconciled the warring factions that contributed to her husband's death. All agree that she became known as a mystic whose devotion to Christ's suffering produced a wound on her forehead as she ministered to the sick and counseled the steady stream of visitors to the convent. In her memory, let's ask today for grace that empowers us to persistence in faith and peacemaking in relationships.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8 (287). *"Whoever remains in me and I in [them] will bear much fruit."*

Thursday, May 23, 2019

EASTER WEEKDAY

The tie that binds

What comes to mind when you think of *love*? Maybe it's the deep connection you have with a loved one. Jesus talked about love in this way: The close relationship he had to the Father was the one he had with his disciples. He also gave us an example of a love that respects others, is patient, and is willing to make sacrifices for the good of others. Love, then, is about both contemplation and action: entering the bond you have with Jesus and the Father and also responding to it. Christ said another thing about love: It makes you happy. There's a unique joy in loving others. Find it today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11 (288). *"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."*

Friday, May 24, 2019

EASTER WEEKDAY

May church and state coexist in peace

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI released a letter to the 9 million Catholics in China, in which he dedicated May 24 each year as a World Day of Prayer for the Church in China. The Holy Father wrote, "the Catholics of the whole world . . . will demonstrate their fraternal solidarity and solicitude for you, asking the Lord of history for the gift of perseverance in witness, in the certainty that your sufferings past and present for the Holy Name of Jesus and your intrepid loyalty to his Vicar on earth will be rewarded." Pray today that the contentious relations between China and the Catholic Church continue to improve.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17 (289). *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you."*

Saturday, May 25, 2019

MEMORIAL OF BEDE THE VENERABLE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Book your faith

A Benedictine monk, Saint Bede (673-735) lived his whole life in the same monastery where his parents had sent him for his early education. While we know him as the source of much of early English history, he was also a great student of scripture and a teacher. Church history, scripture—these are two important areas to know something about to have a better grasp of your faith. Find some books on the subject, like *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* by Thomas Bokenkotter and *Invitation to the Old Testament* and *Invitation to the New Testament*, both by Alice L. Camille.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21 (290). *"If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first."*

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



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