



## SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2016 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME We all need somebody to lean on

Independence resonates deeply for Americans; dependence, even interdependence, not so much. Yet nations, political parties, and people need to trust and rely on one another to survive. The song “Lean on me” reminds us: “Swallow your pride . . . For no one can fill those of your needs / That you won’t let show.” Pride is stubborn, but remember: You depend totally on God for everything from your next breath to eternal salvation, and mutually with others for joy and hope. Pray for our nation, and pray for those you lean on. Oh, and look around for those who may need to lean on you.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 66:10-14c; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 (102)*. “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

## MONDAY, JULY 4 Helping hands

The laying on of hands is a blessing tradition that goes all the way back to Israel (Jacob) blessing his grandsons and Moses naming Joshua his successor, a tradition that continued on up to Jesus bringing a young girl back to life. Later, Peter and John laid on hands to call down the Holy Spirit on the Samaritans. And today, it is part of the sacraments and liturgy of the Catholic Church. It may appear to be a mere gesture, but it’s meant to confer and invoke and transform—if you’re open to being changed by the power of your faith, that is.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 2:16, 17b-18, 21-22; Matthew 9:18-26 (383)*. “. . . lay your hand on her, and she will live.”

## TUESDAY, JULY 5

### FEAST OF ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL Marriage reform starts at home

Fourteenth-century Portugal was not for the faint of heart. In this wild and turbulent setting, Elizabeth quietly went about helping the poor and even managed to reform her wild and turbulent husband, King Denis of Portugal, to whom she had been pledged at the tender age of 10. Whatever situation you find yourself in, even one not of your own choosing, look for opportunities to help others grow and in doing so, to serve the gospel. No matter what, you are always free to act in faith. Cherish and practice that freedom.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:32-38 (384)*. “At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.”

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 6

### FEAST OF MARIA GORETTI, VIRGIN, MARTYR

#### Let mercy and forgiveness be your testament

Canonized in 1950, Maria Goretti was held up in the past as a model of purity, clinging to virginity rather than to life. Today we see her as a victim of sexual assault, horrifyingly common in our world. But sing her praises not only for her bravery, but also for a mercy as stunning as her courage: As she lay dying, she forgave the man who assaulted her. When he was released from prison, he went to Maria’s mother to beg forgiveness, and it was granted. Her attacker ended up devoting his life to a religious order. Mercy had passed from daughter to mother to abuser. What mercy and forgiveness will you pass on as your legacy?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12; Matthew 10:1-7 (385)*. “Sow for yourselves justice, reap the fruit of piety.”

## THURSDAY, JULY 7

### The medicine of mercy

For too long, it was easy to envision the church as a sacramental filling station, where grace was the fuel that got us up and running for another week of routine responsibility. This utilitarian approach to parish life has been replaced by an image from Pope Francis of the church as a field hospital, pitching its tent on the battlefield of a wounded world. Pope Saint John XXIII also preferred to imagine the “medicine of mercy” as the particular service Christ’s church provides to a society in need of healing. We come to serve, not to judge!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 11:1-4, 8c-9; Matthew 10:7-15 (386)*. “I drew them with human cords, with bands of love.”

## FRIDAY, JULY 8

### Love is patient, not abstract

Sonnets of love describe with passionate detail the merits of the beloved that draw such devotion: eyes, hair, lips, hips. Who would declare a burning love in vague or abstract terms? Would such a theoretical declaration ever be convincing? In the same way, Pope Francis reminds us that our love must never be less than concrete if it is to be believable. Our love must be shaped first by our intentions, then revealed in our attitudes, and finally demonstrated in our behaviors. Intentions, attitudes, behaviors—the three-fold way to ensure our love is the real and tangible thing.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Hosea 14:2-10; Matthew 10:16-23 (387)*. “Let [the one] who is wise understand these things; let [the one] who is prudent know them.”

## SATURDAY, JULY 9 FEAST OF AUGUSTINE ZHAO RONG, PRIEST, MARTYR, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS; BVM

### Greet your companions in faith

The name of Father Augustine tops the list of 120 martyrs who died in China between 1648 and 1930. The phrase “and companions” is often used for groups of martyrs, but are they given short-shrift in light of their courage? One doubts that these women, men, and—yes—children would feel ignored, but why not spend a few moments today acknowledging with gratitude your sisters and brothers in faith whose names no one but God may know, your ancestors in the communion of saints?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 10:24-33 (388)*. “Whom shall I send? ‘Here I am,’ I said; ‘send me!’”



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

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