

Sunday, Jul 29, 2018

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Waste not, want not

The earth is in danger of becoming our garbage can. It's estimated that U.S. citizens throw out 90 percent of what we buy within the year. A lot of that is packaging, including the double-packaging of cardboard and plastic around many products. Let's clean up our act! Avoid buying over-packaged items, as well as things you don't really need. Embrace recycling as an act of love for the planet and its people. Find new homes for books, clothing, furniture, kitchen items, and technology. Shrink your footprint, expand your heart.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Kings 4:42-44; Ephesians 4:1-6; John 6:1-15 (110). *"Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted."*

Monday, Jul 30, 2018

MEMORIAL OF PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Silence is golden

Chrysologus (380-451), whose name in Greek means "golden worded," kept his homilies short and practical. And he sometimes preached with such great emotion that he became speechless with the implications of what he was saying. In one way, the Christian message revealed in scripture and tradition is a complex product of centuries. Yet it is also simple. Preachers like Peter Chrysologus recognized the simplicity of the gospel and knew when to stop talking about it, and live it.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 13:1-11; Matthew 13:31-35 (401). *"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field."*

Tuesday, Jul 31, 2018

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

Make a retreat

Ever make a retreat after a busy time in your life? Did you find it hard to slow down and reflect? Picture Ignatius laid up for more than nine months recovering from a broken leg. He had been a soldier, a brawler, a womanizer, and a gambler. Suddenly he was immobile, reading, then praying, and then having mystical experiences. Out of this experience came his Spiritual Exercises, still used on retreats and by the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) today. Schedule a retreat, or at least a day of prayer, and see what changes God has in store for you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 14:17-22; Matthew 13:36-43 (402). *"Jesus dismissed the crowds and went into the house."*

Wednesday, Aug 01, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Walk with me

Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, favored being clear and direct; his meditations on the Way of the Cross are a good example. Though his self-deprecating style may not appeal to everyone's tastes today, love for the suffering Christ underlies his words—a love that anyone who has made it through hard times can share with others. If you can say, "I have an idea what you're going through" with the simple honesty that comes from experience, you may be a source of amazing strength to a

suffering friend, taking the hard road with him or her, and with Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21; Matthew 13:44-46 (403). *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field."*

Thursday, Aug 02, 2018

MEMORIAL OF EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI, BISHOP

A fishy lot

Much like the kingdom of heaven as described in today's gospel, the communion of saints consists of "fish" of every kind—weak and strong, scholarly and pious. Saint Eusebius (d. 370) was a fighter above all else, but his strength was in his words, not his fists. He argued mightily against the Arian heresy (which denied the true divinity of Christ) and suffered exile, persecution, and extreme deprivation in the process. Not all of us are called to be saintly debaters and wordsmiths, but we are called to defend the faith in our own holy ways.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 18:1-6; Matthew 13:47-53 (404). *"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind."*

Friday, Aug 03, 2018

Profitable advice

It's hard to find a good prophet nowadays. No one wants the job; neither did Isaiah nor Jeremiah. It usually ends with both message and messenger rejected, sometimes violently. As Jesus reminded his opponents: "You killed the prophets!" Jesus, by contrast, embraced his role as prophet, though some of his family and neighbors wondered, "Who does he think he is?" We might not consider ourselves prophets, but the Second Vatican Council makes it clear that the People of God share in Christ's prophetic office, "especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise."

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 26:1-9; Matthew 13:54-58 (405). *"Speak to the people; whatever I command you, tell them, and omit nothing."*

Saturday, Aug 04, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

God grows up and shows up

To the people of the Lord's hometown, Jesus was just a kid who grew up in the neighborhood. Some of them were even offended by his preaching, and their lack of faith prevented them from experiencing his miracles. John Vianney (1786-1859), on the other hand, was from out of town. The people of Ars in France, where he served as a priest for 40 years, accepted him as a holy man, and he was able to perform many miracles there. A lesson might be that God is present in both the familiar and the unfamiliar. We only need to look a little more closely, with eyes of faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24; Matthew 14:1-12 (406). *"Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison."*

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



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