

Sunday, Aug 05, 2018

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Free food

Most of us learn early that there's no free lunch. Even when manna falls from the sky, an expectation is attached to this heavenly hoarfrost. It's the expectation that sharing this meal makes you a member of the community; that this community worships the one God; that such an identity involves a life shaped around common values. We eat this bread and drink this cup in perfect freedom. And yes, it's free—for those who take divine life from heaven seriously. Ask yourself: Am I prepared to bring Christ-life into the world?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15; Ephesians 4:17, 20-24; John 6:24-35 (113). *"But Moses told them: 'This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.'"*

Monday, Aug 06, 2018

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Glimpses of glory

Jesus takes the disciples Peter, James, and John up the mountain. There they see their Lord glorified before their amazed eyes. He speaks with Elijah and Moses, to show his connection with the prophets and the law. It's almost as if Jesus is offering his followers some positive reinforcement—"See, your belief in me is true." Not surprisingly, Peter wants to "capture the moment" and remain in this place of assurance, but after they hear a voice from heaven, things return to "normal" and "they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them." As Christians we crave times when we feel what we believe is true. But we can't live in these moments forever. Most of our journey won't be on the mountain but on much more uncertain ground. But still we have Jesus, and we have one another.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Mark 9:2-10 (614). *"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"*

Tuesday, Aug 07, 2018

MEMORIALS OF SIXTUS II, POPE, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Enter into agreement

When Sixtus II became pope in 257, he inherited a controversy so severe it threatened the unity of the church. During the pontificate of his predecessor, Saint Stephen, the churches of Africa and Asia Minor opposed Rome on the issue of whether those who formerly renounced the Christian faith during persecution needed a new Baptism before being accepted back into the church. Rome said they did not. Rather, as Sixtus insisted, the grace of the original sacrament remained even with those who renounced Christ under threat of death. And while he could not persuade the Eastern churches that rebaptism was unnecessary, he was noted for restoring amicable relations. Consider how you can repair communications with those with whom you have disagreements.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22; Matthew 14:22-36 or 15:1-2, 10-14 (408). *"As many as touched it were healed."*

Wednesday, Aug 08, 2018

MEMORIAL OF DOMINIC, PRIEST

Better living through books

The sheer glut of information in which we live tempts us to be satisfied with sound bites, news highlights, even "spirituality lite." However, Dominic reminds us to go deeper. The study of the word of God is "itself an act of worship which sanctifies us," and

"today we need a knowledge of many things if we are to understand the Holy Scriptures properly and apply them to the concerns of our age" (Benedict Ashley, O.P.). A subscription to one of the many high-quality Catholic periodicals or joining a book discussion group might be just the right way to take up Dominic's challenge.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 31:1-7; Matthew 15:21-28 (409). *"She said, 'Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.'"*

Thursday, Aug 09, 2018

MEMORIAL OF TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS, VIRGIN, MARTYR

Great faith doesn't happen overnight

Many of us may be able to pinpoint clarifying moments when our faith comes to life and we are keenly aware of God's presence, but underlying those moments are many hours of reading, discussing, pondering, and questioning. This is the process that Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) went through on her way to becoming a Catholic, a Carmelite, and a martyr among Jews and Christians in 1942. She credits her conversion with reading the autobiography of Saint Teresa of Ávila, but it was her lifelong pursuit of knowledge—challenging her own and others' beliefs—that primed her to read the book that would lead her to Christ. In honor of Saint Teresa, read a book that stretches your mind and heart today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 16:13-23 (410). *"You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."*

Friday, Aug 10, 2018

FEAST OF LAWRENCE, DEACON, MARTYR

Laugh it up

We don't picture saints as having senses of humor. That is what makes the story of Lawrence being roasted over hot coals and telling his tormentors: "Turn me over. I am done on this side!" one of the most retold accounts of martyrdom. Who cares if it is just a legend? It remains a wonderful reminder that many saints laughed amid great hardship and that helped them reach sanctity. What has made you laugh a holy laugh lately?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; John 12:24-26 (618). *"God loves a cheerful giver."*

Saturday, Aug 11, 2018

MEMORIAL OF CLARE, VIRGIN

The spirit of poverty

Saint Clare (1193-1253) was only 18 when she first heard Saint Francis of Assisi preach. His words set her on fire, and she soon ran away from home to bind herself to the Franciscan spirit of poverty and charity. Her family was outraged—even more so when Clare's 15-year-old sister Agnes followed her to the convent several weeks later. In time, all was forgiven, and Clare's mother, another sister, and an aunt eventually became Poor Clares, as the second order of St. Francis became known. Clare's tireless work to preserve the privilege of absolute poverty helped the Franciscan movement survive intact after the death of Francis. Pray for Clare's youthful zeal in committing yourself to Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 1:12—2:4; Matthew 17:14-20 (412). *"Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

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



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