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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2016

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

It all works out in the end

The fantastic creatures and cataclysms common in readings in Advent can seem like we're being frightened into conversion! But the message is not "The end is near!" It is "Christ is near!" Dreams and visions are a kind of biblical writing called "apocalyptic literature," meant to encourage persecuted Christians that God has not forgotten them. Written in the name of some long-ago great prophet or seer, these "predictions" saw in cosmic terms that we'd triumph in the end. What dominates your spiritual life, a sense of fear or hope?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Malachi 3:19-20a; 2 Thessalonians 3:17-12; Luke 21:5-19 (159)*. "Not a hair on your head will be destroyed."

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Stand firm

It's hard to speak up when you know that what you have to say won't be popular or well received. It is even harder if you are criticized and told to be quiet. But if you hold firm and try to pursue the good, and if you listen to the inner voice of conscience that nudges you to say what is right, then you are exercising the moral virtue of fortitude. Pray for the ability to form your conscience to know what is right and what God wants you to do. Pray as well for the grace to speak the truth of your conscience with conviction and compassion.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 1:1-4; 2:1-5; Luke 18:35-43 (497)*. "Those in the lead sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more."

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

MEMORIAL OF ALBERT THE GREAT, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Walk a mile in his boots

A couple of years ago a German bishop gave the hierarchy a bad name by spending \$43 million renovating his private residence, gaining the nickname the "bishop of bling." Albert the Great served as a bishop in Germany for a few years beginning in 1260. The "bling" of the day was to have your own horse to carry you around. But Albert refused to ride a horse, in keeping with the dictates of his Dominican order, and chose to traverse his diocese on foot, earning himself the more honorable nickname "Boots the Bishop." It's not enough to talk the talk. We have to walk the walk.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 3:1-6, 14-22; Luke 19:1-10 (498)*. "Today salvation has come to this house."

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 MEMORIAL OF MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

Keep the Sabbath in your own way

Margaret of Scotland was something of a wonder woman. An 11th-century queen, she was also a wife and mother of eight who spent a great deal of time in personal prayer while caring for the poor as well as her family. She is said to have washed the feet of the poor each day before she joined her family at dinner. Margaret also used

her clout to encourage Scots to reconnect with the universal church, among others things restoring the practice of keeping the Sabbath. In Margaret's honor, resolve to help someone in need today. And plan to truly rest from anything but solitude next Sabbath day.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 4:1-11; Luke 19:11-28 (499)*. "You showed yourself capable in small matters."

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, RELIGIOUS

Give the hungry a royal welcome

Far from the typical image of a queen, Elizabeth of Hungary wore simple clothes and brought bread to those who gathered at the gates of the castle. Members of the royal court derided Elizabeth for her good deeds, trying continuously to foil her plans. Bearing their objections with patience, she spent her royal fortunes serving those most in need. She knew her royal title put her in a position to make a difference. No matter who people might think you should be, strive, like Elizabeth, to be who God has called you to be.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 5:1-10; Luke 19:41-44 (500)*. "If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18

MEMORIAL OF ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE, VIRGIN

Teach us how to fail

She was the patron saint of failure. Philippine Duchesne wanted to be a nun, deceiving her family to enter a cloister. But the French Revolution scattered the nuns and turned the cloister into a prison. When it ended, Philippine reopened the cloister, but the former nuns declined to return. Joining the Sacred Heart order, Philippine sailed to America hoping to be a missionary but spent decades as an administrator of failing schools. A mutiny by her sisters removed her from leadership. Shouldering disappointment, she died a ragged holy figure at the margins. The test of fidelity is in how we endure failures.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 10:8-11; Luke 19:45-48 (501)*; or for the Memorial of the Dedication, *Acts 28:11-16, 30-31; Matthew 14:22-33 (679)*. "Go, take the scroll . . . it will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will taste as sweet as honey."

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19 MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

We believe

What do Catholics believe? The most succinct answer is the Nicene Creed, the profession of Christian faith that is recited at Mass. It simply states what the Catholic Church teaches about the nature of God and the realities of Jesus' life. It's an affirmation of belief in the church itself and in humanity's full reconciliation with God at the end of time. That's a lot to cover in a few short lines that most Catholics know by heart. Don't reduce to rote repetition this wonderful, worshipful, prayerful dictate for life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 11:4-12; Luke 20:27-40 (502)*. "He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."



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

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