

Sunday, Nov 24, 2019

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Real power doesn't grab or push

The bluster of schoolyard bullies isn't much different from the threatening words of the world's tyrants. Only the reach of their destruction sets the tyrants apart. Among the revelatory transfigurations of Jesus is how he deftly transforms divine authority into the surrendering action of a servant. While worldly powers seize and hold, Jesus shares, teaches, and heals. As bullies lash out, Jesus lays down his life and forgives his enemies. The King of the Universe makes no claim on territory or seats of grandeur. His throne is truth, and his realm, justice. Take time to honor him.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 5:1-3; Colossians 1:12-20; Luke 23:35-43 (162). "Are you not the Christ? Save yourselves and us."

Monday, Nov 25, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGIN, MARTYR

A saint for the ages

Just as November begins with the feast of All Saints, it ends with examples of how the church remembers saints such as Catherine of Alexandria (c. 287-305). Iconography reminds us that she was of Egyptian royalty (often shown with a crown), and she could have used her privilege to do almost anything. She chose to immerse herself in the study of philosophy—she's often shown with books. Other symbols remind us of her fate once she was baptized at 14 and rebuked the Roman emperor for persecuting Christians. Catherine is typically depicted with a spiked wheel—a torture device said to have miraculously broken apart as the emperor first tried to execute her—along with the "palm of martyrdom" and the sword that finally beheaded her. We're all called to be saints. What symbols would adorn your holy card?

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20; Luke 21:1-4 (503). "She, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."

Tuesday, Nov 26, 2019

Test the message

Jesus warned against false prophets promising salvation to those who heed their call, yet each age seems to produce its own crop of misguided messiahs. In our own time, many will remember the tragedies associated with delusional figures such as Charles Manson, David Koresh, Yahweh ben Yahweh, and Jim Jones. Be cautious with those who promise much but demand unquestioning loyalty in return. If the fruits of humility, compassion, respect, and integrity are not visible in the message, don't trust the messenger.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 2:31-45; Luke 21:5-11 (504). "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them!"

Wednesday, Nov 27, 2019

I had a dream

You might wonder if God still speaks to us, as in biblical times, through our dreams. The church teaches that while we already have received the fullness of "public revelation," God can still offer us "private revelation"—guidance on our life journey or major decisions—through our dreams. But such revelations are not common—most dreams are randomly generated as part of sleep—and dreams with a message require skillful interpretation

by way of prayer and reflection, and ideally with the assistance of a spiritual advisor. Pay attention to your dreams, but also test them.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28; Luke 21:12-19 (505). "I have heard that you can interpret dreams and solve difficulties."

Thursday, Nov 28, 2019

THANKSGIVING DAY

Deepen your gratitude

Research from the Greater Good Science Center at University of California, Berkeley and A Network for Grateful Living has underscored the importance of gratitude—or "reverence for what is given." Focusing our mental lens on abundance, not scarcity, can lead to dramatic improvements in health and quality of life. Dr. Robert Emmons and Brother David Steindl-Rast pioneered the field that teaches us to appreciate *all* experiences, whether we once labeled them "good" or "bad." Find a gratitude practice for you or your family at gratefulness.org. Try it for a week.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 6:12-28; Luke 21:20-28 (506). "Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Friday, Nov 29, 2019

God's persistent presence

Both of today's readings point toward the notion that God's kingdom persists, no matter what. Daniel presents fantastical, destructive beasts with teeth and horns and thrones of flames. But vanquishing them all is "one like a son of man" with an enduring kingship. In the gospel, Jesus reinforces the idea: the kingdom is near; his words will endure. There is comfort here for the faithful: While the world around us may be in upheaval, God's presence never fails. Allow yourself today to rest in the certainty that God's kingdom is always at hand.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:2-14; Luke 21:29-33 (507). "Know that the kingdom of God is near."

Saturday, Nov 30, 2019

FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

Introducing Jesus

If ever there were a patron saint of introductions—fortuitous, life-changing introductions—it would have to be Andrew. At the beginning of John's gospel, Andrew tells his brother Simon Peter, "We have found the Messiah," before introducing him to Jesus. And we all know how that turned out for Peter! Later, before Jesus performs the miracle that fed 5,000 people, it was Andrew who introduced him to the boy with two fish and five loaves. Later still, it was Andrew who was approached—on the eve of Jesus' death—when a few curious Gentiles wanted to meet Jesus. As Advent begins, consider ways that you, too, could introduce others to Christ. Like the boy with the loaves and fishes, it could be as simple as bringing food to a gathering.

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684). "They left their nets and followed him."

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



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