

Sunday, Aug 16, 2020

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Believe outside the box

A natural tension exists between the familiar and unfamiliar, the neighbor and stranger, our kind and every other kind. Even Jesus seems initially to have limited his mission to “the lost sheep” of Israel. A clever woman, a Canaanite, persuades him to think outside the box on this issue. Later, Saint Paul abandons the box altogether, taking the gospel to the Gentiles outright. We’re the beneficiaries of that decision. These days, as we wrestle with how much we’re obliged to share our land and its richness with others, we might consider the crumbs that fell from the table to us.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32; Matthew 15:21-28 (118). *“It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.”*

Monday, Aug 17, 2020

Be a good steward

When it comes to Christian stewardship, there’s an awful lot we are supposed to take care of—the whole world to be exact! Pope Francis said, “In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts!” The key to stewardship is remembering that it’s not ownership—your talents, your treasure, all of creation were bestowed on you. Show your gratitude to God by using them responsibly and sharing them with others lovingly and generously.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 24:15-24; Matthew 19:16-22 (419). *“Sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”*

Tuesday, Aug 18, 2020

Build a human economy

People’s livelihoods have been hit by COVID-19’s closure of workplaces. Protests over racial inequality shine an unforgiving light on economic inequality. The Catholic Church has a lot to say about how the economy should work to promote the common good. The Catechism of the Catholic Church denounces two economic extremes—communism’s centralized control, but also capitalism’s tendency to make individualism and the market into modern-day idols. Above all, let us remember what the U.S. Catholic Bishops have written: “The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy. . . . A fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring.” Keep that in mind as you make big and small economic decisions.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 28:1-10; Matthew 19:23-30 (420). *“By your great wisdom applied to your trading you have heaped up your riches.”*

Wednesday, Aug 19, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JOHN EUDES, PRIEST

Beyond thank you

Today is World Humanitarian Day, a day established in 2018 by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers who step up in times of crises. If ever there is a year for us to honor and advocate for such workers, it is this year. As the world has faced a global pandemic, we have been challenged more than ever to recognize the essential workers in our midst who have risked their lives for

our well-being. Today is a good day to think about ways to support humanitarian workers beyond a simple thank you through a donation, a call of advocacy to an elected official, or joining alongside them in their work.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 34:1-11; Matthew 20:1-16 (421). *“The last shall be first and the first shall be last.”*

Thursday, Aug 20, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BERNARD, ABBOT, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Faithful through thick and thin

Today is the Memorial of Bernard of Clairvaux, whose impact on Europe in the 12th century was profound and whose influence lives on worldwide in Cistercian monasteries and Catholic theology. He was a scholar (whose books are still readily available), a skilled arbitrator, mystic, monk, reformer, and leader of Europe’s second crusade (a violent venture that ended badly). Through his successes and mistakes, Bernard of Clairvaux aimed to follow Jesus. We are called to do the same. Do one thing today that puts your heart, mind, or skills to the service of God.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 36:23-28; Matthew 22:1-14 (422). *“Tell those invited: ‘Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.’”*

Friday, Aug 21, 2020

MEMORIAL OF PIUS X, POPE

The right of kings that was wrong

Shortly after the turn of the 20th century, Giuseppe Sarto was elected Pope Pius X, but not without controversy. The leading vote-getter of the papal conclave was Mariano Rampolla, but Polish Cardinal Jan Kosielsko exercised a veto in the name of Emperor Franz Joseph. That swung the vote to Sarto. It was the last time a reigning monarch exercised a longstanding right of veto in a papal conclave. Government interference in church leadership has always been an issue, though today less so in most (though not all) parts of the world. Pray for a worldwide church that answers to only one Lord, Jesus.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Matthew 22:34-40 (423). *“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”*

Saturday, Aug 22, 2020

MEMORIAL OF THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

She wears her crown well

Though queenship is a concept quite foreign to a democratic society (especially one that threw off royal rulership at its founding!), when applied to Mary it can be understood as an expression of the Holy Mother’s central role in the reign of God. Though today’s feast, established in 1954, is quite recent in terms of the larger sweep of church history, associations of Mary with queenship go back to the angel Gabriel’s announcement that Mary’s son would inherit the throne of King David. Allow Mary to reign in your heart, especially at times when you are called on to take a leap of faith, as Mary certainly was when Gabriel revealed her mission to her.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ezekiel 43:1-7b; Matthew 23:1-12 (424). *“Son of man, this is where my throne shall be.”*

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



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