

## Sunday, Aug 30, 2020

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Take the road that leads to glory

Suffering is no one's first choice. But some things are worth suffering for. When women give birth, when parents head off to sometimes grueling employment, when soldiers defend against aggressors, when missionaries leave their homeland, when young adults embrace religious vocations, they all accept that a certain amount of pain and loss will accompany these decisions. So Jesus accepts that the way to defeat the grip of sin and death is through a bitter reckoning in Jerusalem. Peter wanted a safer route and a happy ending. But sometimes the happy ending is only reached by the road we're avoiding.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27 (124). "You are thinking not as God does, but as humans do."

## Monday, Aug 31, 2020

### Read to me

"When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people," says the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. What an honor then to be a reader at Mass! The Missal recommends that readers be "people who are truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture." Are you up to the task? Consider volunteering to proclaim the word of God in your parish if you are able, and in any case, thank those who already do so.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Luke 4:16-30 (431). "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

## Tuesday, Sep 01, 2020

WORLD DAY FOR PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION

### Be a breath of fresh air

How do we pray for creation's care? First, we praise the Creator, who shines in every tree, drop of water, patch of sunlight. God's meticulous, elegant creation nourishes us with food and sustains us with beauty. Second, we educate ourselves to the "urgent challenge to protect our common home," as Pope Francis puts it in *Laudato si'*. Third, we join prayer with action. Understanding the damage of climate change, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, consider: What to do personally? As a family? A neighborhood? A church? A nation?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 2:10b-16; Luke 4:31-37 (432). "They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority."

## Wednesday, Sep 02, 2020

### Let them come unto us

One of the many striking features of Jesus' ministry is the fact that he turned no one away. Whether at a meal or preaching and teaching, Jesus welcomed everyone to share in the experience. All who needed counsel or healing received it, regardless of rank or stature. Contrast this with policies in so many areas of society that restrict those who can receive services, support, and aid. What does it mean to really follow Jesus? At the least it means

following his example and building a society that discriminates less, shares more, and places the emphasis on responding to the needs of all people rather than the desires of a few.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Luke 4:38-44 (433). "At sunset, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. He laid his hands on each of them and cured them."

## Thursday, Sep 03, 2020

MEMORIAL OF GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Dynasty, the papal version

Gregory was born around 540 in Rome, in an era when priests were still allowed to marry. Born into Roman nobility, he came with quite a clerical pedigree, including at least one papal ancestor, Pope Felix II, who reigned a century before Gregory was chosen pope by acclamation (another tradition of that era) in 590. We don't memorialize Gregory for his lineage, however, but rather for his humility. He preferred monastic life to high office, resisted the trappings of power, and referred to himself as a "servant" of God—language that was unprecedented coming from a member of the nobility. We can thank Gregory not because he was great, but because he was good.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Luke 5:1-11 (434). "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."

## Friday, Sep 04, 2020

### Have faith in a historical perspective

Marriage customs were quite different in biblical times than they are now, involving some customs that today would seem unsavory, to say the least, such as death by stoning for women who failed to pass a "proof of virginity" test during the consummation of a marriage. Of course, no such proof was available or expected of the groom. Not every custom from biblical days deserves to be admired, much less perpetuated. A historical approach to biblical literature helps us separate the wheat from the chaff in our heritage.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Luke 5:33-39 (435). "Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?"

## Saturday, Sep 05, 2020

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

### She stood fast while others fled

The tradition of dedicating Saturdays not already set aside as memorials to Mary dates to the ninth century. Though the origins of the tradition are not clear, Saturdays serve to remind us that Mary was steadfast in her witness in the dark time between Jesus' Good Friday Crucifixion and his Easter Sunday Resurrection. Mary neither fled nor denied the son she loved and followed. We can recall her resolute discipleship today and every Saturday and commit ourselves to stand vigilant in our own faith, even if at times we stand alone.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 4:6b-15; Luke 6:1-5 (436). "Have you not read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry?"

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



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