

Sunday, Jul 14, 2019

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Won't you be my neighbor?

Fred Rogers, who would later famously have his own "Neighborhood," earned his first degree in music composition. He went to work in television and found his way into children's programming as a puppeteer, composer, and organist. He studied to become a Presbyterian minister and to earn a degree in child development in his off hours. After his ordination, his church agreed he should continue to be the best possible grownup neighbor to children who could use one. Neighbors aren't simply the folks next door. They're primarily the people who need us most.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 30:10-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37 (105). *"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"*

Monday, Jul 15, 2019

MEMORIAL OF BONAVENTURE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Slavery no more

Today's first reading has a theme of slavery. Since many Catholics and church institutions profited from slavery in earlier centuries, the church's message of dignity for all was frequently muted then, but it has become increasingly clear. Modern popes and the official Catechism now strongly condemn the practice—an important stride since present-day slavery (human trafficking) continues to plague the United States and other countries. Take a step to uphold human dignity: Learn about modern slavery and how to help end it.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 1:8-14, 22; Matthew 10:34—11:1 (389). *"The Egyptians, then, dreaded the children of Israel and reduced them to cruel slavery."*

Tuesday, Jul 16, 2019

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

The holy queen of hearts

Mary, the saint of saints, is also a person for all people. Many communities and cultures have a special closeness to her, a testimony of her closeness to the people. Mary was also close to the hermits of Mount Carmel located in the Holy Land of the 12th and 13th centuries. Eventually known as Carmelites, they prayed with Mary and sought her guidance as they walked in faith. They saw in Mary a person of deep prayer who could ponder and hold "all things in her heart." In what ways can Mary accompany you in a more contemplative stance in the world?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 2:1-15a; Matthew 11:20-24 (390). *"The woman therefore took the child and nursed it."*

Wednesday, Jul 17, 2019

Get your exercise

Figuring out God's will is about as daunting an undertaking as there is. Nonetheless, we Catholics are supposed to our base decisions on what we discern God wants. Here's a handy tool: Ignatian spirituality, which comes from the *Spiritual Exercises* by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. This spirituality is characterized by seeking spiritual direction, finding God in all things, examining one's consciousness, and serving those in need.

The *Exercises* are intended to be done over the course of a month. The next time you feel stumped, why not give them a try?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12; Matthew 11:25-27 (391).

"All things have been handed over to me by my Father."

Thursday, Jul 18, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CAMILLUS DE LELLIS, PRIEST

Bad boy makes good

Camillus de Lellis was a 16th-century Neapolitan bad boy. Son of an absent father and a mother who died when he was a child, he grew up unmanaged by family. He joined the army at 16, survived a war, then as a civilian gambled away his fortune. Having been wounded in battle, he came under the care of Capuchin Friars, who succeeded in converting him to the faith. He then founded a religious order of caregivers. Camillus is the patron saint of the sick, hospitals, doctors, and nurses, and the saint's intercession is often sought to heal gambling addiction. Invoke Saint Camillus today for your loved ones who are ill, infirm, or have a gambling problem.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 3:13-20; Matthew 11:28-30 (392).

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

Friday, Jul 19, 2019

FEAST OF SAINT MACRINA

Quibble over formalities or alleviate hunger?

Saint Macrina came from a family of future saints and exerted a strong influence on her siblings through her wisdom and piety. She likely would have relished today's readings. The grains crushed in the hands of Jesus' disciples or the holy bread in David's mouth answer powerfully whenever we question what comes first: rules or a pressing human need such as hunger? Macrina, bless all who hunger today, in body or in soul.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 11:10-12:14; Matthew 12:1-8 (393).

"Something greater than the temple is here."

Saturday, Jul 20, 2019

MEMORIAL OF APOLLINARIS, BISHOP, MARTYR

Rainmakers

Saint Apollinaris, a second-century bishop in Asia Minor, once wrote a letter to the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius in defense of Christianity in general and his own flock in particular. In petitioning the emperor, Apollinaris did not hesitate to remind him of a recent event. While on a military campaign against a Germanic tribe, Aurelius' army was in danger of dying of thirst—until one of his legions, the 12th, which was made up mostly of Christians, fell to its knees and prayed for rain. The sudden storm that followed saved the army and allowed them to defeat the Germans. A grateful Aurelius gave these men the name "Thundering Legion" and eased up on his persecution of Christians. How can you put your life in the hands of God today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 12:37-42; Matthew 12:14-21 (394).

"Many people followed him, and he cured them all, but he warned them not to make him known."

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



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