

Sunday, Aug 06, 2017

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

The power of love

On this day in 1945, humans unleashed a power so deadly that we've spent decades trying to prevent its use in warfare again. Here's how President Harry S. Truman described the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan in a press release sent out 16 hours after the attack: "It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East." Jesus, too, harnessed the power of the universe, but his energy was used to bring light and life. Pray for your enemies today, and call on God's power to help us transfigure hatred into love.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Matthew 17:1-9 (614) *"Jesus was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun."*

Monday, Aug 07, 2017

MEMORIAL OF SIXTUS II, POPE, MARTYR

Power of the people

When the Roman Empire hit hard times, Emperor Valerius ordered the execution of Christian leaders. The church, still young and wrangling over rules, was already agitated as persecution came. Enter Sixtus II, the pope trying to hold everything together, "a good and peace-loving priest," says one biographer. But enter, too, those who follow leaders—the mob, wielding a power all its own. Because Sixtus wanted to protect his assembled flock, he didn't flee the soldiers who stormed a worship service to behead him and his deacons. Crowds also moved Jesus to multiply loaves and fishes. If we must follow crowds, let's make them good ones.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 11:4b-15; Matthew 14:13-21 (407) *"They need not go away; you give them something to eat."*

Tuesday, Aug 08, 2017

MEMORIAL OF DOMINIC, PRIEST

Mary and Martha shake hands

The contest between action and contemplation in the spiritual life is an old one. Just think "Martha and Mary" and you get the picture. Saint Dominic (1170-1221) had the advantage of an early experience with contemplative life to shape his sense that the two impulses should be combined. When he founded his Order of Preachers, the idea was to fuel the ministry of itinerant preaching with a strong dedication to prayer and study. Dominicans today continue to model this unity of purpose. How do you balance the "ins-and-outs" of faith: praying and doing?

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 12:1-13; Matthew 14:22-36 or Matthew 15:1-2, 10-14 (408) *"Heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it."*

Wednesday, Aug 09, 2017

MEMORIAL OF TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS, VIRGIN, MARTYR

A martyr of two faiths

Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein, 1891-1942) was a brilliant woman who earned a Ph.D. in philosophy. She was brought up Jewish, but during her student years she read Saint Teresa of Ávila's autobiography, and as a result she not only decided to become a Catholic but also joined the Carmelite order. After the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands, though the Carmelites

tried to protect her, she was arrested because of her Jewish heritage. She was sent to Auschwitz, where she was gassed. In contemplating the possibility she would be "driven out into the street," she wrote, "Certainly we ought to pray that we shall be spared the experience, but only with the deeply sincere addition, 'Not mine, but thy will be done.'"

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 13:1-2, 25—14:1, 26-29a, 34-35; Matthew 15:21-28 (409) *"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."*

Thursday, Aug 10, 2017

FEAST OF LAWRENCE, DEACON, MARTYR

The true wealth of the church

Saint Lawrence was a deacon known as the keeper of the church's treasures. That means he disbursed donated alms to the needy. In August of 258 A.D., Emperor Valerian outlawed Christianity, and Roman authorities demanded that Lawrence turn over the wealth of the church. Lawrence appeared before the authorities followed by a multitude of Rome's crippled, blind, sick, and needy. He had given away everything the church possessed to these people and told his persecutors, "Here are the true treasures of the church." Though Lawrence was executed, this story is a reminder of the true treasures our church holds—all of us who need its tender care.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; John 12:24-26 (618) *"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain."*

Friday, Aug 11, 2017

MEMORIAL OF CLARE, VIRGIN

Are you imagining things? Good!

Before Saint Clare's birth, one biographer wrote, it was revealed to her mother that the child "would be a brilliant light in the world." As abbess of the first convent of Franciscan sisters, Clare rose from her sickbed to pray for the protection of her sisters from marauders and heard a voice say, "I shall always watch over you." At her death in 1253 she saw the Virgin Mary coming to meet her. Were these things only products of the imagination? Even if they were, imagination is necessary to making something real. With faith, that imagination might soar all the way to heaven.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Matthew 16:24-28 (411) *"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."*

Saturday, Aug 12, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL, RELIGIOUS

All God wants is our heart

Widowed young and suddenly, Jane Frances de Chantal (1572-1641) faced a difficult life raising her six children alone. Then she chanced to hear Francis de Sales preach and became his lifelong friend. She was taken by the notion that "all God wants is our heart," and her writings are centered on the two facets of love: devotion to God and neighbor. She was convinced a life of simple contemplation would provide the grace necessary to serve others. She urged the victory over self-absorption with "great gentleness," never wanting to force or oblige. Pray for the gentle victory over the self today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 6:4-13; Matthew 17:14-20 (412) *"Nothing will be impossible for you."*

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



©2017 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. **Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.**