

Sunday, Aug 20, 2017

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Fearless faith

The award for the Lady with the Most Chutzpah in the New Testament might be viewed as a toss-up between the Samaritan woman at the well and the Canaanite woman with the sick daughter. Neither is named, but both take on theological debates with Jesus that are pretty gutsy. The Canaanite woman may have the edge for the prize in her verbal sparring with Jesus. He is ministering to his own people, the “house of Israel,” but she insists that even dogs deserve kindness, and Jesus marvels at her faith. Approach God boldly in prayer!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32; Matthew 15:21-28 (118) *“Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”*

Monday, Aug 21, 2017

MEMORIAL OF PIUS X, POPE

Poor Pope Pius?

Pius X (1836-1914) was both adored and abhorred during his papal reign. He promoted frequent Communion and spirituality for laypeople. But he also condemned many secular ideas that were influencing Catholicism—influencing for the better, many thought—such as trade unions and democratic decision-making. There’s no denying Pius X’s commitment to poverty, though. He chose to be buried in a simple tomb and wrote, “I was born poor, I have lived poor, and I wish to die poor.” In remembrance, do something today for the poor.

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 2:11-19; Matthew 19:16-22 (419) *“He went away sad, for he had many possessions.”*

Tuesday, Aug 22, 2017

MEMORIAL OF THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

It's good to be queen

In the musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Lucy is dismayed to learn she can't be queen when she grows up. You have to be born one. “If I can't be a queen,” she says, then “I'll work and work until I'm very rich and then I will buy myself a queendom.” Good grief. Wrong on both counts. Queen saints got there doing unqueenlike things like giving away their wealth. Mary, too, simply lived the incomparable dignity of being a woman, a good and holy Jew, a mother. The only thing her son ever ran from was a crowd that wanted to make him king. Exalting us is someone else's job.

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 6:11-24a; Matthew 19:23-30 (420) *“Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Wednesday, Aug 23, 2017

MEMORIAL OF ROSE OF LIMA, VIRGIN

Inside and out

Appearances rule in pop culture. The beautiful people occupy the covers of magazines and get all the buzz for their many sightings and multiple marriages. We are likewise bombarded with the externals of clothing and housing and vehicles, as if looking good will somehow increase our internal value. Rose of Lima (1586-1617), by all accounts a beautiful woman, was alarmed by the attention her good looks brought her and chose to disappear from the world altogether, living in a hut as a recluse. Decrease the amount of time you spend on clothes and hair, and add those

minutes to your daily prayer routine.

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 9:6-15; Matthew 20:1-16 (421) *“Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”*

Thursday, Aug 24, 2017

FEAST OF BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

A nearly anonymous apostle

Poor Bartholomew, the mystery apostle. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles call him Bartholomew, but in John he might be the person named Nathaniel. An interesting lesson for those who think the Bible is clear about everything—even the names of the 12 apostles! But aren't most of us nearly anonymous disciples ourselves? We don't get mentioned in the church bulletin all the time, and not everyone knows who we are or remembers our name at the parish fair. But we are faithful followers of Jesus nonetheless, and we find our reward not in recognition and praise, but in knowing we are quiet helpers of the one who saves the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: Revelation 21:9b-14; John 1:45-51 (629) *“We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.”*

Friday, Aug 25, 2017

MEMORIALS OF LOUIS; JOSEPH CALASANZ, PRIEST

A common calling to care

Two men quite unlike each other, both saints, and both revered for similar reasons: their concrete love for the poor. In the mid-13th century, Saint Louis embraced the way of Saint Francis of Assisi and cared for the poor even as king of France. It is said that Louis had 13 guests from among the poor to eat with him daily. Saint Joseph Calasanz in the mid-16th century saw that the need to educate poor children was so important that he gave up a career in church law and politics. You can't read of these lives without thinking of how simple true Christianity is: to care for the poor, the hungry, the forgotten.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22; Matthew 22:34-40 (423) *“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”*

Saturday, Aug 26, 2017

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary is our model

You may be familiar with the 16th-century Litany of Loreto, which gathers wonderful images of Mary such as Mystical Rose, Tower of Ivory, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, and Morning Star. Saint Francis of Assisi in the 13th century had a similar litany, his “Salutation of the Virgin,” which hails Mary as Christ's Palace, Tabernacle, Home, Robe, Handmaid, and Mother. But perhaps the most striking is Mary as “Virgin made church”: Mary as the model for all Christians to pray, “Let it be done unto me according to God's word” and who is always directing us toward her son, saying again and again, “Do what he tells you.”

TODAY'S READINGS: Ruth 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17; Matthew 23:1-12 (424) *“The greatest among you must be your servant.”*

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



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