



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

**SUNDAY, JULY 4, 2010** FOURTEENTH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME; INDEPENDENCE DAY  
**Declare to share**

In early July of 1776, at the time of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams wrote of the importance of the moment to his wife Abigail: "It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more." Despite our problems and challenges as a nation, we can give thanks today for the many blessings we enjoy. And we can commit ourselves to doing our part so that all who reside in our land can share in those blessings.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 66:10-14c; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 or 10:1-9*  
*"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."*

**MONDAY, JULY 5** FEAST OF ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA, PRIEST  
**Log on to Jesus' chat room**

Anthony Zaccaria (1502-1539), an Italian priest and devoted admirer of Saint Paul, founded three religious orders: one for men, one for women, and one for married couples. His letters, of which only 11 remain, are warm, deeply spiritual, and very human. In his second letter, for example, he laments the irresoluteness and indecisiveness that renders him incapable of making any progress—a conundrum we can surely all appreciate! Throughout his writings, in a variety of ways and for all problems and difficulties, he offers this counsel: Ask Jesus for help. "Enter into a conversation with Jesus as familiarly as you would with me . . . chat with him and ask his advice." We ought to do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 2:16, 17b-18, 21-22; Matthew 9:18-26*  
*"Your faith has made you well."*

**TUESDAY, JULY 6**  
**Don't close your eyes**

Years ago teenage driver education students were forced to watch an instructional film describing the "I.P.D.E." method of driving safely. "I.P.D.E." stood for *identify, predict, decide, and execute*. Of course some high-schoolers in their inimitable way restated the meaning as *identify, pursue, destroy, and escape*. How you perceive things affects what you decide to do. If you see with the eyes of faith, all people become children of God and every situation becomes an opportunity to seek the good of others. Close the eyes of faith and you sink into the darkness of self-centeredness. The best instructions to follow: Keep your eyes on God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:32-38*  
*"They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes, but without my knowledge."*

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 7**  
**Offer the present**

Perhaps you have heard the phrase "pie in the sky when you die," usually uttered in disdain as a critique of Christianity's supposed exclusive focus on the hereafter. Jesus, however, was clear on this point—his message to his disciples was unequivocal: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." That is a present-tense description; the kingdom is here and now, not there and then. Jesus' message has profound implications for Christians and for the entire church: We have a mission to the world, to make a difference for

good here and now. Start small; what acts of goodness, generosity, and forgiveness can you offer today that will help make the kingdom present for someone else?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12; Matthew 10:1-7*  
*"As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'"*

**THURSDAY, JULY 8**  
**Peace is a choice**

We all want peace. But how we hope to *get* peace is a different matter. Some expect it to drop from heaven at some future time. Others are convinced we must fight for the right to it. Pope Benedict XVI made a direct pitch for peace at the start of the New Year when he declared: "I want to appeal to the consciences of those who are part of any kind of armed group. To each and every one I say: Stop, reflect, and abandon the path of violence." You and I may not recognize that we, too, go into each day "armed" for conflict. Try laying down your defenses today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 11:1-4, 8c-9; Matthew 10:7-15*  
*"For I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath."*

**FRIDAY, JULY 9** FEAST OF AUGUSTINE ZHAO RONG, PRIEST, MARTYR,  
AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

**Catholicism can be subversive**

If you're visiting China, you will soon discover that there are two Catholic Churches: the real one and the "official" one. The second is the up-front one you can see. It's sanctioned by the government. The real one is the one you can't see. It's an illegal, underground community with hidden clergy and clandestine sacraments. The Chinese government sees Christianity as culturally subversive, which of course it is. That's why when Zhao Rong was baptized and ordained a priest in the 19th century, he was among a group of 120 Catholics arrested and executed for criminal activity. Sometimes real Catholicism puts you at odds with your society and your government. Can you accept that?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Hosea 14:2-10; Matthew 10:16-23*  
*"You will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them."*

**SATURDAY, JULY 10**  
**Pick me!**

"Here I am; send me!" Think about these two simple yet powerful statements of Isaiah. "Here I am" is a recognition that I am present. I am someone. I matter. Further, it is a recognition of the unique talents, personality, creativity, and spirit that God has blessed me with. "Send me!": I am a fully capable person who can influence the world through the gifts I've been given, gifts that are not for me alone but in turn to give to others. "Send me!" is a readiness to be surprised by God, trusting that the unknown future will be brought to good by God. Spend time with these words and let them echo in your heart throughout the day.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 10:24-33*  
*"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'"*

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