



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

**SUNDAY, JULY 25, 2010**

**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Let's hear it for parents**

In 1994 President Clinton signed a congressional resolution setting aside the fourth Sunday of July as Parents' Day for "recognizing, uplifting, and supporting the role of parents in the rearing of children." Embracing this day is easy for those of us who have or had loving parents, but for those of us who didn't experience great parenting, we may find it hard to feel uplifted. Surely, however, we can all celebrate the fact that we have a perfect divine parent who has loved us unconditionally and cared for us unceasingly since before we were born.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:12-14;*

*Luke 11:1-13*

*"If you then . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

**MONDAY, JULY 26**

**FEAST OF JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**  
**A little goes a long way**

A kind word can transform a day. One encouraging adult can redeem a childhood of negativity. An award can reroute a career path. Often it doesn't take much to make a huge difference, just as a pinch of yeast can make a bowl of flour rise into loaves. Not all of us can influence world affairs—but we can each do our part to lessen fear, increase hope, demand justice, call for peace. After all, Joachim and Anne were only two people raising a little girl in an irrelevant place. Yet what they did changed human history.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 13:1-11; Matthew 13:31-35*

*"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with . . . flour until all of it was leavened."*

**TUESDAY, JULY 27**

**Your thoughts are calling**

Jesus never wastes words in the gospels, but we know he wants to make absolutely sure we are paying attention when he concludes his comments with "whoever has ears ought to hear." Jesus knows that we humans have a tendency to tune in and out of our surroundings. Sometimes we are so captivated by our thoughts—last night's conversation, an endlessly repeating song fragment, the stories we continually tell ourselves about the past and future—that although we believe we're listening, and have every intention of listening, we aren't really listening. Make the decision today to pay attention to your thoughts. Are you tuned in or out of your surroundings most of the time? What are you missing?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 14:17-22; Matthew 13:36-43*

*"Let anyone with ears listen!"*

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 28**

**Hunt for a lasting treasure**

Have you ever heard stories of people who spend considerable amounts of time and money in pursuit of a dream—restoring a beautiful home, starting a business or charity, doing something they truly enjoy? Those were the kinds of undertakings Jesus used in some of his parables, except he drew on the activities of his time: a person who buries a treasure in a field and then sells all he has to buy the field; a merchant who finds a fine pearl and

sells all he has to buy it. As with his other parables, Jesus used "likes"—the kingdom of heaven is *like* treasure hidden in a field; it is *like* something we would give a lot to have. Think about the things you are willing to make sacrifices for. Is the kingdom of God like one of them?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21; Matthew 13:44-46*

*"On finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."*

**THURSDAY, JULY 29** FEAST OF MARTHA

**Remember Martha's message of hope**

Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus were close friends of Jesus. Martha has come down to us as the original "Type A" personality, the busy one in Luke's gospel who has trouble sitting still when Jesus visits. But she also was a woman of great courage and faith in the face of loss. We can take inspiration from her simple, strong profession of faith in the gospel. Even in the face of her great grief at having lost her brother, she was unshaken in her faith that Jesus was the "resurrection and the life." When a death leaves us feeling devastated, Martha's witness can bring us strength and hope.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 18:1-6; John 11:19-27 or*

*Luke 10:38-42*

*"I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God."*

**FRIDAY, JULY 30**

**Not exactly what they had in mind**

When the prophet Jeremiah stood up to speak in the Temple, he attracted a crowd. And when Jesus taught in the synagogue of Nazareth, the people were amazed—at first. In both cases, however, things turned hostile pretty fast. Those around Jesus could not believe one of their own could speak and act with such authority. For Jeremiah it got even worse: *His* audience wanted to kill him. The message of faith may not always be what we want to hear, but we are called, nonetheless, to listen and follow God's word in all its forms.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 26:1-9; Matthew 13:54-58*

*"Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power?"*

**SATURDAY, JULY 31** FEAST OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

**The priceless gift of yourself**

"Teach us to give and not to count the cost." These words of Saint Ignatius Loyola summarize the call of the gospel to give of ourselves entirely to God and to living the gospel. That doesn't mean we should all choose religious life or become martyrs—though some of us will be called to those vocations. To give ourselves entirely to living the gospel is to be mindful that each moment gives glory to God. Wonder how to do that? Think about parents of young children. They are excellent models of living Ignatius' words. Children are always pulling on their parents' shirttails, needing help as they grow in love and understanding. Parents constantly give—and give again and again—not counting the cost. May all of us do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24; Matthew 14:1-12*

*"For in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."*

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