



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

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2008** FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD; VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK; WORLD DAY OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS  
**Commit, follow, serve**

Today we have a rare collision of three important commemorations: the Baptism of the Lord, the start of Vocations Awareness Week, and a day in memory of the world's refugees and migrants. But these feasts go hand in hand: In commemorating the baptism of Jesus, we actually remember our own baptisms, where our commitment to follow Jesus began. This commitment—our Christian vocation—is at its essence a call to bring good news to the poor. The poverty-stricken refugee and migrant populations of the world are in dire need of good news. Go forth among the people.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Matthew 3:13-17*

*"I have given you as a light to the nations, to bring out from the prison those who sit in darkness."*

## MONDAY, JANUARY 14

### Rapid response team

Those first disciples called by Jesus "immediately" left everything and followed him. Often we're inspired by a Sunday sermon or something we read in the paper or hear on the news. Then we feel the need to change our lives in some way in order to become better people. Yet change is hard when so much holds us in place: our families, our jobs—all our responsibilities. Yet there is always a need to leave something behind in order to gain something better. What must you let go of today in order to answer the Lord's call to fulfillment?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:1-8; Mark 1:14-20*

*"Jesus said, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him."*

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 15

### FEAST OF ITA, VIRGIN, ABBESS

### The head of the class

After rejecting her father's wishes that she marry a nobleman, Ita (born Deirdre in the fifth century) left home at the age of 16 and established a convent in what is now the county of Limerick, Ireland. In addition to her devotion to prayer and care of the sick, the poor, and the elderly, Ita founded a school for boys. Among her students was Brendan, who later became a saint in his own right: Saint Brendan the Navigator. He credits Ita as one of the most important influences of his life.

We might not be in charge of a classroom, but we're all teachers in one way or another, affecting and influencing the people around us by what we say and do. What are my words and actions teaching others today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:9-20; Mark 1:21-28*

*"What is this? A new teaching with authority."*

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

### Just being there is not enough

Woody Allen once said, "90 percent of life is just showing up." What, though, do we do for the other 10 percent? The story of God calling the prophet Samuel attests that just showing up won't take you the whole way. The first two times Samuel heard a voice calling him in the night, he responded only, "Here I am!" The priest Eli, knowing something of God's ways, informs the young man that merely presenting himself in the holy place is

insufficient. Samuel must also declare himself the servant of the lord. Likewise, we should not rely on just showing up for the Lord. The final 10 percent is the whole way.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20; Mark 1:29-39*

*"As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground."*

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 17

### FEAST OF ANTHONY, ABBOT

### Desert demons, desert grace

Anyone who thinks of monks, nuns, or hermits as fugitives from the struggles of "real" life needs to meet Anthony of Egypt. His notorious confrontations with desert demons, while exaggerated by artists from Bosch to Dali, were as real as those of any contemporary city-dweller struggling to live a godly life. The demons within are not felt only in the desert, and they're not always your standard "world, flesh, and devil," but may take the shape of boredom ("same old same old") and laziness ("whatever"), as they did for Anthony. Not only are our struggles to stay faithful something we have in common with saints, but like them our only recourse is God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45*

*"He was outside in desert places, and they came to him from every quarter."*

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 18

### One in Jesus

Today begins the Octave ("eight days") of Prayer for Christian Unity, a week of special prayer for the unity of all Christians with Jesus the Lord—who prayed at the Last Supper for his followers "that they all may be one." Many things keep Christians in their separate churches and communities. But in the end they share a common faith in Jesus who shows us who God is and calls us to love one another as God loves us. Pray today—and this week, and beyond this week—that Christians will find more to unite them than divide them.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a; Mark 2:1-12*

*"So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them . . . and Jesus was speaking the Word to them."*

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

### Get into the ecumenical spirit

Not sure what you can do to promote Christian unity besides avoiding calling other Christians non-Catholics? Here is some simple advice found in Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism*: "All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism.'"

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1; Mark 2:13-17*

*"Many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus—for there were many who followed him."*

©2008 by TrueQuest Communications, L.L.C. PHONE: 800-942-2811; E-MAIL: [mail@takefiveforfaith.com](mailto:mail@takefiveforfaith.com); WEBSITE: [www.TakeFiveForFaith.com](http://www.TakeFiveForFaith.com).

Licensed for noncommercial use. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotes come from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Contributors: Father Paul Boudreau, Alice Camille, Daniel Grippo, Father Larry Janowski, Ann O'Connor, Sean Reynolds, Joel Schorn, Patrice J. Tuohy