



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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Answer the call

Ever feel overwhelmed in the face of a monumental experience? Many of us have been there, including the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah had known firsthand the glory of God. In the face of such great beauty and goodness, he felt keenly his own imperfections and those of his community. God, too, saw the truth of Isaiah's situation, but God also saw Isaiah's commitment and desire to serve. God accepted Isaiah as he was and at the same time helped transform him so that he could more fully serve God. That enabled Isaiah to step up and volunteer his life. In what ways do you hear God's call? What will help free you to step up to the call?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or 15:3-8, 11; Luke 5:1-11*

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send . . . ?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'"

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8

FEAST OF JEROME EMILIANI, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

New directions amid life's twists and turns

There are a number of saints like Jerome Emiliani, men who had been mercenary soldiers and in some cases lived hard lives, gambling, drinking, and brawling. Some even landed in prison. But they later underwent profound conversions that redirected them to lives of service. Emiliani, for example, ran away from home when he was 15 and became a soldier in Venice in 1506, only to be captured by the enemy. Praying for deliverance to the Virgin Mary, he got away, hung his chains on a church wall as an offering, and began studying for the priesthood. During an outbreak of spotted fever he cared for the sick and orphans in his own home. He later founded orphanages, a hospital, and a religious order. Jerome turned out right after making some wrong turns. Remember that God makes it possible for you and the people around you to be more than your pasts and always to find new paths.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13; Mark 6:53-56*

"Wherever he went . . . they laid the sick in the marketplaces . . . and all who touched it were healed."

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Are your lips sealed?

The 19th-century *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* defined "lip service" as "verbal devotion; honoring with the lips while the heart takes no part nor lot in the matter." This definition holds up pretty well today, as it did in biblical times. Technology may progress and develop, but human nature is much more stubborn. The next time you find yourself worshipping, whether in a pew, a prayer group, or in your own home, reflect on whether what is on your lips is also in your heart. If not, pray for a renewed heart!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Mark 7:1-13*

"This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 FEAST OF SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN

Ask and you will receive

Little is known of Saint Scholastica's life beyond the fact that she was the twin sister of Saint Benedict, the founder of Western

monasticism. She and her brother were accustomed to meeting once a year to talk and pray. On what Scholastica sensed would be their last evening together, she asked Benedict to stay with her until morning. He refused, citing his rule that a monk may not be away from the monastery overnight. Scholastica then bowed her head in prayer and almost immediately a severe thunderstorm broke out, making it impossible for Benedict to leave. God loves to be asked to help. Rather than stewing in resentment or worry, remember Scholastica and ask God to help you with God's wonderfully creative solutions to trouble and conflict.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 10:1-10; Mark 7:14-23*

"Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you."

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES; WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK Everyday miracles

Today, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, is also the World Day of Prayer for the Sick, a reminder that Jesus' reputation was largely as a healer. The sick of Jesus' day were often assumed to be on God's wrong side and as such were often excluded from society. Healing was rare. While medicine is now a science able to help countless people recover from illness, it is still true that a caring, human touch can also have a healing effect. Lourdes perhaps more than any other Marian shrine is associated with the miracle of healing. Today I can perform the miracle of breaking the barrier of isolation that makes illness even harder to bear.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 11:4-13; Mark 7:24-30*

"A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet."

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Listen up, speak up

Jesus performed many miracles but never did so by force. Neither would he coerce anyone to listen to him, much less to speak up on his behalf. If we choose to ignore the Good News in our own lives, we have the free will to do so. It does us well to be on guard, therefore, so that we do not fall into a sort of spiritual deafness and muteness in which we neither listen to nor speak of our faith. God would never force you to do so—faith is freely given and freely exercised. Exercise yours today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19; Mark 7:31-37*

"He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13 FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Don't leave hungry

Some folks will always set out food when you visit their homes no matter what time of day it is. If you're smart you learn to drop by when you're good and hungry! Jesus never let anyone walk away hungry either—even if it meant setting the table for 5,000. His mother foretold that fact in her great song, the Magnificat: "He has filled the hungry with good things." When tired of the junk food the world has to offer, pray Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:47-55) in faith that God will fill you with good things.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34; Mark 8:1-10*

"If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way."

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