



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

SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 2008

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Looking for laborers

Fathers, wouldn't it be great for your children or grandchildren to land the best job in the

world? What a great Father's Day present that would be. How about encouraging them to become a different kind of father—or a sister or brother? A recent survey listed “clergy” as the career choice offering the most job satisfaction. Despite the scandals that have rocked the church, Catholic priests are still among the happiest people on earth, and religious brothers and sisters also have unusually high job satisfaction. Jesus told his disciples to pray for vocations to the ministry of the harvest. Combine your prayers with words of encouragement and some literature from vocation directors or diocesan vocations offices. A lifetime of happiness is all that we could wish for our children.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 19:2-6a; Romans 5:6-11; Matthew 9:36-10:8*

“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

MONDAY, JUNE 16

Bottomless pockets

People often seek guidance about how to respond to the “spare change” people who camp out on city streets. They also want to know what to do with the mountains of solicitations they receive in the mail. Obviously, if we gave every single time we're approached, some of us would be asking for spare change ourselves before long. But the secret truth we don't like to acknowledge is that most of us could give far more than we do. The best advice I've received is: Give till it scares you. That's the threshold where the faith walk begins.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 21:1-16; Matthew 5:38-42*

“Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.”

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Breaking even

The love to which Christ calls us is not a zero-sum game. But we often treat it that way. We are polite to the coworkers who are polite to us. We send birthday gifts to those who remembered ours. Perhaps we only give that amount of affection to our spouses that we can be sure he or she will reciprocate. When we treat people according to the way they treat us, our love is a slave to the wills of others. It can never flow freely. We seek to break even in our love, when all we do is allow the other party to dictate its limits. This attitude is so contrary to the love of Christ, who loves each according to his own will, his own grace. Pray today that your love will flow through the freedom Christ has given us.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 21:17-29; Matthew 5:43-48*

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?”

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

Left holding the bag—or the mantle

Elijah's farewell is less about a prophet's grand exit in an F-4 tornado and more about what remains of him. Like Elisha, the friend and disciple left behind, we may feel the absence of Jesus and overwhelmed by the task he has left us. But Elisha is left with more than memories and a ministry. He has his master's mantle, and a “double share” of his spirit. In our turn on the

planet, we, too, may feel our Master has left us on our own, but Jesus assures us that here on earth we will do the same things he did “and greater besides”—not walking on water or changing water to wine but “righteous deeds,” acts of compassion, justice, and forgiveness.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Kings 2:1, 6-14; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18*

“As Elijah and Elisha continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven.”

THURSDAY, JUNE 19 FEAST OF ROMUALD, ABBOT

Note to myself: Become a saint

Sometimes the life of a saint can seem so far beyond our ability to model that we feel defeated before we start. How many of us have thought, “I could get close to God, too—if I didn't have this demanding job, or these children to care for, or this household to manage. Anyone can pray in a monastery!” Saint Romuald, who spent his life in pursuit of solitude, silence, and contemplation, understands our dilemma. He wrote, “The fact that we cannot duplicate their [the saints'] lives does not change the call to us to be totally open to God in our particular circumstances.” Yes, we are busy. But God is calling us “in our particular circumstances.” How can we be open to God today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-14; Matthew 6:7-15*

“In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words.”

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

Eyes on the prize

Perhaps you have heard of a monastic discipline called “custody of the eyes,” which originally was promoted as an aid to chaste living. In our age of total media exposure and graphic representations of sex and violence, we would do well to exercise a measure of this discipline in our own lives. If the eyes are the window to the soul, there might indeed be good reasons to keep the blinds half drawn much of the time. Overexposed eyes can lead to a washed-out soul. Focus on your higher calling and exercise discipline as to where you let your eye wander, for there your heart may soon follow.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20; Matthew 6:19-23*

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

SATURDAY, JUNE 21

As you sow, so shall you reap

“If we are rushed for time, sow time and we will reap time,” Dorothy Day wrote in her memoir *The Long Loneliness*. “Go to church and spend a quiet hour in prayer. You will have more time than ever and your work will get done. Sow time with the poor. Sit and listen to them, give your time lavishly. You will reap time a hundredfold. Sow kindness and you will reap kindness. Sow love, you will reap love.” How many of us would try to cope with our busy schedules by actually taking time for something not on our to-do lists? Yet if we trust, God will multiply the time we invest in prayer, love, and generosity into a great harvest.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Chronicles 24:17-25; Matthew 6:24-34*

“Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

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