

Sunday, Feb 23, 2020

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

See clearly beyond racism

How do we fight the popular recommendation to circle the wagons around “our stuff” or, worse, “our kind”? In their 1979 pastoral on racism, our bishops noted: “Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society.”

Racism affects *everything*: immigration, education, economics, zoning laws, healthcare, and criminal justice. Pray to see the color of your values.

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; Matthew 5:38-48 (79). “*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God.*”

Monday, Feb 24, 2020

Let your doubt strengthen your faith

Faith is a gift that invites us to believe in that which cannot be seen with our eyes, only our hearts. So it is not unusual to experience some doubts along life’s way. A sudden death, a violent crime, or nothing you can pinpoint can trigger doubts. When doubts arise, do not be afraid. Do not run from the questions but trust that facing them can lead you to a deeper faith. When darkness clouds what you once took for granted, speak honestly to God even if you doubt God is listening, read God’s word in scripture for each day, and beg the unseen God to increase your faith, as the Catechism puts it.

TODAY'S READINGS: James 3:13-18; Mark 9:14-29 (341). “*I do believe! Help my unbelief.*”

Tuesday, Feb 25, 2020

[MARDI GRAS]

Time to resolve our differences

Traditionally today was a day to finish off all the rich and fattening foods in the household, including meats, which were given up for Lent. Thus the origins of the term Mardi Gras (“Fat Tuesday” in French), and the word *carnival* might be derived from the Latin for “removing or taking away meat.” The excesses of some modern-day celebrations of the Carnival season, however, have obscured its connection with Lent. The tension between celebration and fast is nothing new. In 1559, the Dutch master Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*, contrasting scenes of raucous celebration on one side of the painting and solemn religious observance on the other. How do you resolve the tension of excess in your own life?

TODAY'S READINGS: James 4:1-10; Mark 9:30-37 (342). “*Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.*”

Wednesday, Feb 26, 2020

ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE

When we do without, we grow within

Is there any spiritual practice more tied to Lent than fasting? Forgoing creature comforts is the biblical way to express our sorrow for sin. It’s a sacrifice that reminds us of what Jesus sacrificed. It also has the knack of clearing the clutter from our hearts so that our minds can focus on prayer. Make the most of your fasting this Lent by taking some advice from Saint Peter

Chrysologus: “Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself.”

TODAY'S READINGS: Joel 2:12-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (219). “*Return to me with your whole heart, with fasting.*”

Thursday, Feb 27, 2020

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Set your intention

“Well begun is half done,” quipped the eminently practical Benjamin Franklin. Today is a great day to get into the spirit of Lent, if Ash Wednesday didn’t fully accomplish that for you for whatever reason. We have a rare opportunity to slow down and quiet our lives for the next few weeks. What is complicating life right now that you can simplify? How about giving up stress and fasting from complications this Lent as part of your spiritual practice? Turn Lent into a positive experience of drawing ever closer to Jesus, the source of life, light, and love in your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 9:22-25 (220). “*I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then.*”

Friday, Feb 28, 2020

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Think fast

Catholics abstain from meat on all Fridays during Lent for many reasons. It is a sacrifice—a reminder of Christ’s sacrifice on Good Friday. It is an act of humility as we eat modestly. It is an experience of solidarity with those who go without. It is penance for our past wrongdoings and an exercise in discipline to help us abstain from sin in the future. It is a form of preparation as we hunger, symbolically, for the eucharistic meal. Jesus fasted to draw closer to God and draw upon him for help. Now’s your chance to do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 58:1-9a; Matthew 9:14-15 (221). “*The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*”

Saturday, Feb 29, 2020

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Take a leap of faith

It’s nice to know that the leap year has a historical connection to the Catholic Church. In 1582, Pope Gregory introduced the Gregorian calendar, still in use in much of the world today. The calendar corrected the former Julian calendar by providing a more accurate calculation of the year with the addition of an extra day every four years so that the calendar did not drift too far away from the actual movement of the earth around the sun. Let’s give a special nod to Pope Gregory today for keeping us on track as we work to stay on course with our Lenten promises.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 58:9b-14; Luke 5:27-32 (222). “*If you call the sabbath a delight, and the LORD’s holy day honorable . . . then you shall delight in the LORD.*”

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



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