

Sunday, Aug 09, 2020

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ghosts of the past, spirit of the present

Nagasaki was the second and last city to date to endure attack by atomic weapon. In the instant after the bomb's release, 35,000 people were killed, mostly factory workers. Those factories, which supported the Japanese war effort, were the targets of the attack. It all made sense in a war room at the time. After the mushroom cloud clears, however, we have to reckon with the ghosts of our choices. The animated drama, *In This Corner of the World*, offers a moving reflection on the personal cost of these attacks on ordinary Japanese citizens. Pray for all victims of war, and for lasting world peace.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33 (115). *"The disciples saw him walking on the sea. . . . 'It is a ghost,' they said, and they cried out in fear."*

Monday, Aug 10, 2020

FEAST OF LAWRENCE, DEACON, MARTYR

Be inspired by the martyrs among us

Lawrence, a Roman deacon who was martyred in 258, is one of the most venerated of saints, and there are many legends about his gruesome death, which prompted widespread conversions to Christianity in his city. Most Christians aren't called to such spectacular sacrifice, but there are other types of martyrs—ordinary folks in every generation who face adversity with total commitment to God and sow the seeds of faith all around them. They are martyrs at the hands of disease, hatred, bigotry, selfishness, and cruelty. They fight the good fight and leave us all the better for it. Pray for that level of faith and perseverance.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; John 12:24-26 (618). *"Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life."*

Tuesday, Aug 11, 2020

MEMORIAL OF CLARE, VIRGIN

We are what we love

Those who enter consecrated life in the Catholic Church make at least three vows—of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Known as the Evangelical Counsels, the vows are meant to shield disciples from greed, lust, and pride. For most religious orders, poverty is simply a commitment to shared (rather than individual) ownership. But Clare of Assisi, among the first followers of Saint Francis and the first woman known to write a set of monastic guidelines, made sure her order of Poor Clares owned nothing at all. "We become what we love," she wrote. "If we love things, we become a thing." In honor of Clare, take some time to examine what you love and what you own to see whether anything is hampering your spiritual life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 2:8-3:4; Matthew 18:1-5, 10, 12-14 (414). *"Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest."*

Wednesday, Aug 12, 2020

Get engaged

One of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching—Call to Family, Community, and Participation—asserts that we have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to seek the common good, taking special care of the poor and vulnerable. Since 1999, the United Nations has set aside August 12 as

International Youth Day to celebrate and enhance the global efforts of youth to build a better world. This year's theme is "Youth Engagement for Global Action," and we've certainly seen evidence of that in recent street protests. What are you doing to engage youth? Offer young people you know a call to action—or better yet—respond to the call they offer you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22; Matthew 18:15-20 (415). *"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst."*

Thursday, Aug 13, 2020

MEMORIAL OF PONTIAN, POPE, AND HIPPOLYTUS, PRIEST, MARTYRS

Bring them out of exile

Today's saints—Pontian and Hippolytus—endured exile together. They were forced by third-century Roman emperor Maximinus to work in the mines of the island of Sardinia and eventually perished there. Formerly, they had been a pope (Pontian) and theologian (Hippolytus). The church advocates at many levels for migrants who have been exiled from their homeland by war, poverty, or persecution. In homage to exiles across the centuries, consider taking a step today to aid migrants in your region of the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 12:1-12; Matthew 18:21—19:1 (416). *"'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.'"*

Friday, Aug 14, 2020

MEMORIAL OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE, PRIEST, MARTYR

Witness to the world

Many young Catholics may have had the opportunity to read the comic book "Soldier of God," about the life of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, who was killed in the Auschwitz concentration camp. It begins: "This is a true story of a real flesh-and-blood hero of God." Young readers were captivated, and most could not forget the images of Maximilian volunteering to take the place of a man who was selected to be killed. "Would I do that?" is an instinctive question when faced with such powerful witness. Not all are called to martyrdom, but each Christian commits to being an example of God's deep love and care for people, especially the most vulnerable. "How can I be God's witness?" is a good question to ask yourself each day.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 16:1-15, 60, 63 or 16:59-63; Matthew 19:3-12 (417). *"Live in your blood and grow like a plant in the field."*

Saturday, Aug 15, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Hidden glory revealed

Mary, now united totally with her son, with whom she suffered excruciating ordeals, shows us how suffering transforms to glory. She gathers all her human children close in this season of harvest, her bounteous fruits and flowers. Today's gospel shows Elizabeth affirming in Mary a vigor and holiness, mirroring God's, that she herself might not have recognized. This feast points to the same glory in each of us, perhaps hard to believe, but still hidden, vital, intact.

TODAY'S READINGS: Day: Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; 1 Corinthians 15:20-27; Luke 1:39-56 (622). *"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior."*

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



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