

Sunday, Aug 23, 2020

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

What is to be healed must first be acknowledged

Today, on the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition, we seek forgiveness for what's been called the "original sin" of our nation: seeing people of color as exploitable resources. Generations of slaveholders were unrepentant about horrific acts they deemed to be entirely moral. The sin of racism that made such attitudes possible has been condemned heartily by the church in more recent generations—though some church leaders in generations past were late coming to that perspective as slaveholders themselves. If racism is to be overcome, we each have confessions to make, repentance to do, and voices to raise.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 22:19-23; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 16:13-20 (121). *"The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees, and the proud he knows from afar."*

Monday, Aug 24, 2020

FEAST OF BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Take your place

Bartholomew gets only a mere mention as one of the 12 apostles in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and is believed to have been the one called Nathanael in the Gospel of John. But what does a name matter, when Jesus knows you, and knows your character, before you even meet? The "greater things" to come that Jesus promised Bartholomew didn't include the glory of a leading role in salvation history, since little else is known about him, but did include being a firsthand witness to God's glory. There's a front-row seat waiting for you, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: Revelation 21:9b-14; John 45-51 (629). *"Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him."*

Tuesday, Aug 25, 2020

MEMORIAL OF LOUIS

A royal example of God's kingdom

No wonder Saint Louis is the patron saint of the Franciscan Secular Order. He used his position in the world—as King Louis the IX of France—to help build the kingdom of God. Like Francis of Assisi, Louis fed lepers and beggars, usually waiting on them himself. He built hospitals and orphanages to take care of his people. He was committed to being a just ruler: "upholding the cause of the poor." Pray such a priority might overshadow partisan politics among policy makers.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, 14-17; Matthew 23:23-26 (426). *"Cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean."*

Wednesday, Aug 26, 2020

Keep it real

Hypocrisy is the "practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform." Jesus made it clear that he had no patience with such duplicity, as he called out those who spent more time criticizing the religious practices of others rather than living his law of love. Examine your attitudes and words today to see how often critical judgment of others is your prevailing state of mind. The list of small

critiques, like little pinpricks, can easily deflate a joyful spirit. Ask for the grace to be centered in Divine love.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18; Matthew 23:27-32 (427). *"Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing. Woe to you, . . . you hypocrites."*

Thursday, Aug 27, 2020

MEMORIAL OF MONICA

Stick-to-itiveness pays off

Saint Monica, one of a relatively small number of African saints, is typically described as Saint Augustine's long-suffering mother, who prayed, cajoled, and urged him to abandon his wayward life and embrace Christianity, which he eventually did. Her own intellectual and leadership abilities are unrecorded except as they influenced her family members, but her story of persistence and strength continues to inspire. Many in the church uphold her as a model of enduring faith. If you feel like quitting when faced by a difficult problem or problematic family member, pray to Saint Monica for wisdom and perseverance.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Matthew 24:42-51 (428). *"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Stay awake!'"*

Friday, Aug 28, 2020

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

A sin for the ages

In his theological work *The City of God*, Saint Augustine (354-430) proposed that slavery, an accepted practice of his day, was sinful and did more harm to the slaveholder than the enslaved person. Although Augustine's sentiment may have seemed enlightened for its time, slavery, particularly among poor people and people of color, continues to this day in various forms around the world. We can see the evil that racism perpetuates. All of humanity is straining under the weight of this sin. It is time for each of us to "open wide our hearts," as the U.S. bishops advised in their 2018 pastoral letter on racism. We do well to have a first (or fresh) look at it today.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 1:17-25; Matthew 25:1-13 (429). *"Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."*

Saturday, Aug 29, 2020

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Bravely lead the way

Speaking up—when staying silent would have been easy—cost John the Baptist his earthly life, though it gained him a special place in the heavenly pantheon. He stands as a unique witness to the coming of the Lord, and along with Jesus and Mary, is the only individual honored with multiple feasts in the liturgical calendar. You may not always risk death to speak out against injustice, but it does take courage and a sense of duty to something greater than yourself. Let John the Baptist be the inspiration you need to be a prophetic voice.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (430); Mark 6:17-29 (634). *"When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb."*

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



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