

Sunday, Sep 16, 2018

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The answer this time

We evolve. This is one of the most grateful things about existence, that we're not required to remain stuck in our stuff. We grow, learn, and adapt through the years. Our relationship with the Holy One evolves too. So, when Jesus asks us once more—Who do you say that I am?—our reply may well be different this time. Is Jesus still the God someone gave us long ago? Has Jesus become more real and necessary: as a friend, brother, healer, teacher, fellow sufferer, or champion? Is Jesus Lord of our lives, judge, irritant, role model, or inspiration?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 50:5-9a; James 2:14-18; Mark 8:27-35 (131). "And Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?'"

Monday, Sep 17, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ROBERT BELLARMINI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Make care for the poor a cardinal virtue

The Italian Jesuit Robert Bellarmine (d. 1621) is rightly remembered for his brilliance—he was made a cardinal by Pope Clement VIII on the grounds that "he had not his equal for learning." But while Bellarmine wore the red hat and had an apartment in the Vatican, he refused to live the high life. He maintained his austere disciplines, spending the bare minimum on his own needs and eating only the food available to the poor. It is said that he even used the tapestries he found in his Vatican apartment to clothe poor people, remarking, "The walls won't catch cold." Pray that all the leaders of the church share Bellarmine's vision of what it means to be a servant of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 11:17-26, 33; Luke 7:1-10 (443). "I did not consider myself worthy to come to you, but say the word and let my servant be healed."

Tuesday, Sep 18, 2018

What you do for the least helps the most

One of Jesus' greatest gifts was his ability to comfort people who were suffering. He did that by performing miracles, of course, but also by simply accepting each person he encountered. Jesus' method was simple, but 2,000 years later it is apparent that we still have much to learn about how to treat the most fragile and vulnerable among us. The French geophysicist Xavier Le Pichon, in a profoundly personal and moving essay titled "Ecce Homo" ("Behold Humanity"), writes that when people turn toward the suffering ones in their midst, the entire community is transformed. Take some time today to read Le Pichon's essay and hear his extraordinary life story at onbeing.org. You won't be sorry.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31a; Luke 7:11-17 (444). "When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'"

Wednesday, Sep 19, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JANUARIUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

They're there when you need them

The bishop Saint Januarius, who died near the beginning of the fourth century, is known primarily for the San Gennaro festival named after him and for a famous phenomenon: the liquefying of a vial said to be his blood that has been going on several times a year in Naples, Italy for centuries. Apparently, he was an inspiring presence even before that. When Saint Paulinus of Nola

was dying in 431, he called out to Saints Januarius and Martin of Tours, "who a little while ago were speaking to me and promising me that soon I would join them," a biography says. Saints are always available. Pray to them for help and let them serve as examples of love and service in your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13; Luke 7:31-35 (445). "Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts."

Thursday, Sep 20, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANDREW KIM TAE-GÖN, PRIEST, PAUL CHÖNG HA-SANG, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

What they did for love

"Love makes the whole difference between an execution and martyrdom," Evelyn Underhill once said. As one of Christianity's renowned commentators on mysticism, she should know. The saints we call mystics are hailed for their utmost trust in God's love, their sheer abandonment to its power. But martyrs take it one step further—abandonment to even the point of death. Such devotion is "not an affair of red cassocks and authorized hymnbooks," Underhill wrote, "but a burning and consuming fire." As we remember today nearly 10,000 Korean martyrs, most of them laypeople, who were tortured and killed for their love of Christ, whose blood built the church in Korea, reflect on what real love looks like and what helps it grow.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 7:36-50 (446). "You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment."

Friday, Sep 21, 2018

FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST

I'm the tax man

Before Matthew was an apostle, he was a tax collector. Tax collectors as a rule are not the most popular people on the block, but they were despised in Roman-occupied Jewish lands, where they did the dirty work of collecting the Empire's taxes. Jesus' desire to mingle with such people scandalized the religious authorities, but Jesus was more interested in being with "tax collectors and sinners" than with the righteous, who felt they had nothing to learn from Jesus and no need to reform their lives. If we want Jesus to feel comfortable in our homes and hearts, it is good for us to guard against righteousness, the temptation to elevate ourselves by judging others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643). "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Saturday, Sep 22, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Run like a girl

The spiritual life is often described in sporting terms: Fight the good fight, run the race, win the crown. These come from an ancient Greek culture immersed in the excitement of athletic games and competition. But there are other ways to triumph, spiritually speaking. Mary of Nazareth employed the gospel paradox of the weak surpassing the strong through utter reliance on God's promises. Her "race" involved domestic life, birth and death, security and danger and challenge. Competition isn't the only way to win.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Luke 8:4-15 (448). "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you."

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



©2018 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. **Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.**