

Sunday, Jan 15, 2023

Tend your inner lamp

Why do we take so many pictures of sunsets and sunrises? Why fill our homes with chandeliers, lamps, and candles? To the eye, light is incredibly attractive. It illuminates all that surrounds it, offering us not simply its own glow, but redeeming the whole environment swallowed by darkness and delivering it back to us. People who carry an inner light are similar. We're attracted to their aura, but even more so to how clear and bright reality appears when we're in their company. Saints attract others with their light long before the church bestows on them the customary halo. Let your light shine!

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; John 1:29-34 ([64](#)). "*I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.*"

Monday, Jan 16, 2023

Help the dream awaken in all hearts and minds

Many people have today off from school and work in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Why not make it a "day on" instead? Spend at least a little time working for peace and justice today, as King did every day. This is the only federal holiday that is also designated by Congress as a national day of service. The Catholic Church has embraced King's call for racial equality. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "Racism and every form of discrimination ... must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design." Lift a hand to help in your community, and pray that love banish hate.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 2:18-22 ([311](#)). "*The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them.*"

Tuesday, Jan 17, 2023

Make space for silence

The *Apophthegmata Patrum* is a 1,600-year-old collection of writings known as the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. These texts record the teachings of the earliest Christian monks, who congregated in the desert of Egypt. The wisest among these monks was Anthony the Abbot. He wrote: "Just as fish die if they stay too long out of water, so the monks who loiter outside their cells or pass their time with men of the world lose the intensity of inner peace." When Christianity became politically accepted—and martyrdoms ceased—Anthony sought the desert to experience a different kind of sacrifice. There he found silence and solitude, too. Seek God in silence today.

MEMORIAL OF ANTHONY, ABBOT

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 6:10-20; Mark 2:23-28 ([312](#)). "*Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions were hungry?*"

Wednesday, Jan 18, 2023

There's room in this big tent

Every camper knows that it's a stretch of the imagination to think that a four-person tent can really fit four people! You're lucky if two people and a backpack fit! In Catholic circles, however, tents have a different meaning. Instead of being short on space, this tent is expandable, able to include everyone, not just one or two. This image is core to the church's "Synod on Synodality" in which all

Catholics, including the marginalized, give voice to their experience and together discern God's call. If you want more specs on this big tent, have a look at the USCCB website.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17; Mark 3:1-6 ([313](#)). "[Jesus] said to the man with the withered hand, 'Come up here before us.' "

Thursday, Jan 19, 2023

Come in from the cold

Christmas is over and Epiphany has faded. In much of the Northern Hemisphere, the days are cold and dark. This is when the warmth of the Christian tradition is more important than ever. Pope Francis has often encouraged Christians to practice their faith in warmth and kindness: "Let us light fires of fraternity around which people can warm themselves," he said at a 2022 meeting with migrants in Malta. That's advice we can all take to heart—and to heart. Can you find a word or gesture today to add positive warmth to a wintery world?

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 7:25—8:6; Mark 3:7-12 ([314](#)). "*He had cured many and, as a result, those who had diseases were pressing upon him to touch him.*"

Friday, Jan 20, 2023

Twelve is enough

Twelve months of the year. Twelve inches in a foot. Twelve numbers on the face of a watch. We certainly like our twelves. So does the church. The most famous of course is the 12 apostles, often simply called the Twelve. There's also the 12 days of Christmas and 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit. It's not just that 12 is a handy number for grouping things, it also carries symbolic value. It signifies completion or fullness. Twelve eggs, for example, means you have a full carton. And 12 apostles means the church has everything it needs to preach the Good News. Count your spiritual blessings—by the dozen!

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 8:6-13; Mark 3:13-19 ([315](#)). "*He appointed Twelve, whom he also named Apostles.*"

Saturday, Jan 21, 2023

No has always meant no

As a young girl of 13 or 14, Agnes refused all suitors because she had betrothed herself to Christ. As punishment, she was taken to a brothel. One man attempted to violate her, only to be mysteriously struck blind—until Agnes restored his sight. Historical or not, this story reminds us that the scandal of child sex trafficking has always been, and still is, very much with us. Millions of girls and boys are kidnapped, bought and sold, exploited and violated for profit every year. You can help end childhood sex trafficking at the Save the Children and United Nations websites. Act in honor of courageous Agnes.

MEMORIAL OF AGNES, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14; Mark 3:20-21 ([316](#)). "*Cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.*"

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



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