

Sunday, Jan 23, 2022

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / WORD OF GOD SUNDAY

Those aren't fighting words

Most fights don't start with a punch, but with a word. That's because words are among the most powerful forces on the planet. Ideas divide or unite a society. Insults scar, just as kind words can heal. Our sacred story contained in scripture is a word meant to make the world whole. Pope Francis asks us to honor the word of God this Sunday. We begin by symbolically enthroning the Bible in our homes today: putting it in a place of honor. This reminds us of the deeper enthronement of God's word in our hearts. Make room for one Bible verse every day.

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21 (69). *"Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."*

Monday, Jan 24, 2022

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

God, our shield and our strength

We live in tumultuous times for sure. But the world has been topsy-turvy before. Saint Francis de Sales lived during the religious, political, and social upheaval of the Protestant Reformation. And he became known for his gentleness and patience in the face of it. Leave it to him, the patron saint of writers, to pen a prayer that is timeless balm for troubled souls: "Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering, or he will give you unflinching strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations . . ." A balm for these troubled times.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10; Mark 3:22-30 (317). *"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."*

Tuesday, Jan 25, 2022

FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL, APOSTLE

Harden not your heart

Paul has always been a controversial figure. Before becoming a Christian, he was a persecutor of Jesus' followers. Paul's biblical words advising women to be submissive to their husbands have been alternately obeyed, rejected, and reinterpreted. But the word "conversion" on this feast reminds us what Christian life is about. The Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes Saint Ambrose on the "two conversions" in Christian life—one of them a one-time event and the other ongoing. "There are water and tears, the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance." What parts of your life still require repentance?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18 (519). *"Jesus . . . appeared to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

Wednesday, Jan 26, 2022

MEMORIAL OF TIMOTHY AND TITUS, BISHOPS

Stay the course

Evangelizing and living the gospel demands much of us. Saints Timothy and Titus serve as examples to us of holding fast to the faith among difficult circumstances. Friends and companions of Saint Paul, they ended up becoming bishops and leaders of the early church. They helped Paul to spread the gospel during those difficult early years. Timothy paid the ultimate price for encouraging others to embrace the emerging Christian faith.

Reflect on the ways you choose to follow Jesus Christ and embrace his mission despite the challenges and difficulties it presents.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5; Mark 4:1-20 (520; Gospel 319). *"[T]hose sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."*

Thursday, Jan 27, 2022

MEMORIAL OF ANGELA MERICI, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

Wise counsel for the overwhelmed

On this memorial of Saint Angela Merici, 16th-century founder of the Ursuline Sisters, it makes sense to recall one of her many insights into faith-filled living. She advised the overwhelmed thus: "Do not lose heart, even if you should discover that you lack qualities necessary for the work to which you are called. He who called you will not desert you, but the moment you are in need he will stretch out his saving hand." May you find that saving hand when you reach the end of your rope.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:18-19, 24-29; Mark 4:21-25 (320). *"Is a lamp brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed, and not to be placed on a lampstand?"*

Friday, Jan 28, 2022

MEMORIAL OF THOMAS AQUINAS, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Root yourself in honesty

G.K. Chesterton once said of philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas, "Being himself resolved to argue, to argue honestly, to answer everybody, to deal with everything, he produced books enough to sink a ship or stock a library." We could use a little more Thomas in our media, especially social media, because today we're not always sure if things are actually true or merely "internet true." For Thomas, honesty was key to communication. He considered it beautiful, honorable, and a reflection of moral goodness itself. May we take to heart his commitment to honesty in all of our communication.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17; Mark 4:26-34 (321). *"Once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade."*

Saturday, Jan 29, 2022

Sea of hope

Alonzo Ketcham Parker, a 19th-century travel writer, called the Sea of Galilee "a fifth gospel" due to the amount of biblical history that occurred on its shores. It is the site where Jesus performed many of his most renowned miracles, such as walking on water, calming the storm, and feeding the multitude. Villages and settlements dotted the shore in Jesus' day, and most of Jesus' followers probably gained their livelihood and nourished their families from its bounty. The nourishment continues every time we read the vivid accounts of biblical drama that occur on the holiest of seas. Dive in!

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17; Mark 4:35-41 (322). *"He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Quiet! Be still!' The wind ceased and there was great calm."*

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



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