

Sunday, Jul 04, 2021

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Get Jesus right and get right with Jesus

With so many Christian "brands" out there—Catholic and Protestant, evangelical and contemplative, high church or pop church—it's easy to wonder who's got Jesus right. Interpreting his significance is key to the church's mission. Still, Jesus' identity has been debated since his own generation. Mark's gospel, the earliest written, betrays a perceived shadow on Jesus' paternity: He's identified as Mary's son rather than the son of Joseph, as would have been customary. Later gospels replace what was seen at the time as a less-than-honorable reference by calling Jesus the "carpenter's son." The question remains: Is Jesus more than a human sage? Is he Lord of your life?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 2:2-5; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Mark 6:1-6a (101). *"Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?"*

Monday, Jul 05, 2021

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL

Seek the common ground of reconciliation

The world is rife with conflict. Many friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors are at odds over politics, racial strife, and pandemic behavior and vaccines. After all this, it can be hard to ever feel the same way about certain people in our lives. But we're called to be peacemakers nonetheless—and that starts with our personal relationships. Saint Elizabeth of Portugal brokered peace in her family to stop civil war. We've never needed her brand of reconciliation more.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 28:10-22a; Matthew 9:18-26 (383). *"Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you."*

Tuesday, Jul 06, 2021

MEMORIAL OF MARIA GORETTI, VIRGIN, MARTYR

A mission of mercy

Pope Francis proclaimed an extraordinary Year of Mercy in 2015, but it was one of the Catholic Church's youngest saints—11-year-old Maria Goretti—who took the message abroad. The Pilgrimage of Mercy, featuring Maria's major relics, traveled across the United States that year, attracting multitudes to veneration, prayer, and the sacrament of Reconciliation. Canonized a modern-day "virgin martyr," dying at the hands of a would-be rapist in 1902, this humble Italian girl became "The Little Saint of Great Mercy" for forgiving her murderer upon her deathbed. Who do you need to forgive? Let Maria's example be a reminder of what is possible.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 32:23-33; Matthew 9:32-38 (384). *"His heart was moved with pity for them."*

Wednesday, Jul 07, 2021

Harden not your heart

In 2018, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a pastoral letter against racism: *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. In that letter, the bishops remind us that as a nation "we have never sufficiently contended with the impact of racism." In a week when the United States honors the founding principles of this country and that all are created equal, people of faith are called to examine their own

perceptions and practices and do their part to ensure equality for all people. Embrace the bishops' invitation to fight the evil of racism and take time this week to read and reflect on their letter:

Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a; Matthew 10:1-7 (385). *"As you go make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

Thursday, Jul 08, 2021

Sometimes the miracle is endurance

The gospel for today refers to the amazing powers Jesus conferred upon his followers to cure and revive. But we know many people in Jesus' day and today do not experience a miracle cure but instead must bear a cross. Our faith gives us the wisdom to know how and when to bear suffering when a solution is absent and when to struggle against injustice; both can be paths to God. Indeed, miracles themselves, the church teaches, are not merely wondrous events; they are meant to transform us and bring us closer to God. Which way are you being called right now? To struggle against suffering and injustice? Or to bow to a cross in your life? Over a lifetime, we may be called to both paths.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5; Matthew 10:7-15 (386). *"Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons."*

Friday, Jul 09, 2021

Hang in there

Each of us will be put to the test when it comes to our faith. How we react to tragedy, scorn, injustice, boredom, betrayal, illness, and loss will present moments of truth for us. Will our faith endure? Saint Paul tells the Romans that "tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope." Paul knew a thing or two about perseverance. His lengthy missionizing sea journeys covered something on the magnitude of 10,000 miles and many months on often rough seas. When you feel tested, turn to Paul for inspiration. Stay the course!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 46:1-7, 28-30; Matthew 10:16-23 (387). *"Whoever endures to the end will be saved."*

Saturday, Jul 10, 2021

OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Ever Virgin, ever esteemed

It is ironic but true that the Blessed Virgin Mary is mentioned more times in Islam's Qur'an than in the Christian New Testament. Parts of two chapters of the Qur'an are devoted to Mary. Much like in the gospel of Luke, one chapter tells the story of the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The other speculates about Mary's family, her parents and siblings, making linguistic parallels to the family of Moses. As in Catholic tradition, Islam considers the Mother of Jesus the greatest of all women of faith. The spiritual influence of the Virgin Mary transcends even religious differences.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 49:29-32; 50:15-26a; Matthew 10:24-33 (388). *"Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known."*

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



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