

Sunday, Jul 05, 2020

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

God's here, in the flesh

A small boy resisted saying good night. His father told him, "Don't worry, I'm in the next room." The child pleaded, "But I need you here." Taking a religious tactic, the father said, "You're not alone; God is always with you." Placing both hands on his father's cheeks and drawing his face level to his own, his son replied: "But God don't have no skin." The child perceived that a faceless, invisible God is not of much help on those dark nights when we need a friend near. But God does have skin in the game. The divine Presence is as close as our concern for each other.

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9, 11-13; Matthew 11:25-30 (100). *"Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones."*

Monday, Jul 06, 2020

MEMORIAL OF MARIA GORETTI, VIRGIN, MARTYR

The power of "I forgive you"

As 11-year-old Maria Goretti lay dying after being stabbed for rebuffing the sexual advances of a 21-year-old man who lived on her farm, she forgave her attacker. That act alone is shocking enough. But her attacker was so affected by her forgiveness that he repented in prison, prayed to her every day, sought the forgiveness of her mother, attended Maria's canonization in 1950, and became a lay brother. Makes it pretty hard for anyone to justify a grudge, much less retribution.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 2:16, 17b-18, 21-22; Matthew 9:18-26 (383). *"Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you."*

Tuesday, Jul 07, 2020

Wonders never cease

The Seven Modern Wonders of the World were identified on this day in 2007, counterparts to the seven ancient wonders that predate the earthly life of Jesus. Two of these modern monuments—the Colosseum in Rome and Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro—could be the bookends to Christian history. The Colosseum, symbolic of Roman emperors' power, was where early martyrs died while Christianity was outlawed. The colossal Redeemer statue celebrates Christ's ongoing presence in the world. It was used recently to honor pandemic healthcare workers. It proclaims that Christ's love endures now as it did in the time of the Colosseum. Proclaim that love in your own life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:32-38 (384). *"They made idols for themselves, to their own destruction."*

Wednesday, Jul 08, 2020

The cure for what ails us

Anointing of the Sick is one of the seven sacraments of the church. In its pre-Vatican II life, this sacrament was called Extreme Unction and was reserved for the time of death. Now the church invites all who are seriously sick or experiencing the challenges of advanced age to receive the grace of this sacrament. Celebrated at home, in a church, or in a healthcare facility, often in the presence of loved ones, this sacrament offers those who are sick the peace, strength, and courage of the Lord who himself knew the pain of human suffering. Draw on God's healing powers and encourage others to do so as well. COVID-19 has

complicated pastoral visits, especially in medical facilities, so consult with a priest or chaplain about the wisest course of action.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12; Matthew 10:1-7 (385).

"Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority . . . to cure sickness and disease of every kind."

Thursday, Jul 09, 2020

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE ZHAO RONG, PRIEST, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Faithful unto death

When Christianity first emerged, members of the early church were often persecuted and even killed. Although the targeting of Christians has waxed and waned over the centuries—depending on the political powers and their attitude toward the faith—Christians continue to suffer at the hands of civil authorities and religious extremists, as did the subjects of today's optional memorial, Augustine Zhao Rong and companions, who were martyred in China over a 300-year period. In honor of these Christian martyrs, take a moment today to learn more about interreligious cooperation, an ongoing effort the Holy Father has championed.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 11:1-4, 8e-9; Matthew 10:7-15 (386).

"Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."

Friday, Jul 10, 2020

Don't get comfortable

As Christians, we not only face the hardships of daily existence, but also the challenges arising from living out a faith that demands justice. When it comes to justice, there is no comfort zone for Christians to sit back and watch. The gospels and the long tradition of Catholic social teaching call us to more. No matter your gender, race, or ethnicity, you must be willing to act: to challenge the racist or sexist joke, to support minority-owned businesses, to see yourself in the "other." Catholic leaders are calling now especially to stand with people of color who are disproportionately infected with and dying from COVID-19. How are you being called beyond your comfort zone?

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 14:2-10; Matthew 10:16-23 (387).

"Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves."

Saturday, Jul 11, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BENEDICT, ABBOT

A rule to live by

Saint Benedict's wisdom has guided people for centuries. Among the gems of his *Rule*: The search for security, wealth, and salvation is futile. Instead, treat each hour as a gift. See in each day reasons for joy. Reverence the tools of work like the vessels of the altar. Small, daily brush strokes create the stunning canvas. Important decisions should be made with consultation, gaining the richness of different viewpoints. Learn from relationships not to take oneself too seriously. Know the value of silence. Choose one of these guidelines to follow each day for a week. Then start again!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 10:24-33 (388). *"And even the hairs of your head are all counted."*

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



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