

Sunday, Jul 11, 2021

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Each one, bring one

A lot of things in life are lonely. Being sick, being wrong, and being broke are hours difficult to share with anyone not inside the experience. Happily, religion isn't intended to be a solitary undertaking. Jesus formed a community before he engaged his ministry, and he urged his followers to go out in pairs. If you're struggling to ground your prayer life, make a deeper commitment to Bible study, or get a work of service or justice off the ground, remember: Companions in faith make the way more joyful and fruitful.

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 7:12-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:7-13 (104). *"Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two."*

Monday, Jul 12, 2021

Cross purposes

No one said the path of Christian discipleship was going to be a bed of roses—but it is indeed the way of love. "The temptation is to follow a Christ without a cross," Pope Francis said—that is, to succumb to an easy albeit empty life that the world offers. Instead, "If we live our lives for the Lord, set on fire with love, then our lives will be fruitful and we will have genuine joy," said Francis. What's more, there's food for the journey, he reminds—we rediscover the mystery of Christ's cross every time we participate in the Eucharist.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 1:8-14, 22; Matthew 10:34—11:1 (389). *"... whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me."*

Tuesday, Jul 13, 2021

MEMORIAL OF HENRY

Words matter

Holy Roman Emperor Henry II championed the Nicene Creed. He encouraged its official recitation during the Mass, a practice that didn't gain papal approval until the 11th century. And he promoted the *filioque*. *Filioque* is Latin for the four small words—"and from the Son"—used in the Nicene Creed to describe the origin of the Holy Spirit, who, Catholics and Protestants believe, "proceeds from the Father and the Son." Draw strength from our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer God, and honor the Blessed Trinity today by praying a "Glory Be."

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 2:1-15a; Matthew 11:20-24 (390). *"Jesus began to reproach the towns where most of his mighty deeds had been done, since they had not repented."*

Wednesday, Jul 14, 2021

MEMORIAL OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA, VIRGIN

See with the eyes of faith

Some people survive trials and adversity with a faith that cannot be explained. Saint Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-80) is one of those people. At the age of 4, Tekakwitha was physically scarred and left nearly blind by a smallpox epidemic that took the lives of her parents. Though she continued to live among her people, she followed a different path than most. Baptized Kateri (Catherine) at the age of 19, she soon found a distant village of Christian Native Americans who accepted her desire to remain single and devote

her life to Jesus. The life of this first Native American saint was short, but her kind and deep faith left its own lasting mark. Visit the website: Shrine of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12; Matthew 11:25-27 (391). *"Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."*

Thursday, Jul 15, 2021

MEMORIAL OF BONAVENTURE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Bask in reflected glory

Understanding and proving the existence of God has been a human pursuit since the beginning of time. For medieval Franciscan philosopher Saint Bonaventure, vestiges of God's existence are found in all God's creatures and, indeed, in all creation. Thus, he posits, we see God, "through a mirror." As our understanding of God increases, we begin to see God "in a mirror"; that is, we see the image and likeness of God in all things. For Bonaventure, signs of God's existence are all around, and God is present in each of us. "Therefore," says Bonaventure, one "who is not brightened by such splendors of created things is blind." Open your eyes to our all-around God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 3:13-20; Matthew 11:28-30 (392). *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Friday, Jul 16, 2021

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

The view from on high

If there were such things as spiritual "power points" on Earth, Mount Carmel would have to qualify as one. A range on the Mediterranean coast in Northern Israel, Mount Carmel has been a crossroads for religious traditions, military strife, monastic life, biblical archeology, and now, modern urban living. There is something for everyone on Mount Carmel, which is perhaps why it has a long and contentious history. Today, join your prayers for peace in the Middle East with those of Carmelites the world over. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us!

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 11:10—12:14; Matthew 12:1-8 (393). *"God replied, 'I am who am.'"*

Saturday, Jul 17, 2021

No one is without dignity

Bruised reeds and smoldering wicks were commonly discarded in ancient society because they were no longer useful for the purpose they served. People were often treated the same way. If a person was blind, lame, or suffered leprosy, they were essentially discarded by society because they were seen as a burden that couldn't be sustained. But Jesus taught of the sacred dignity of all human life regardless of health or usefulness, and that our final judgement would be based on our treatment of the least among us. Can you take a moment today to in some way lift up a lowly or outcast person?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 12:37-42; Matthew 12:14-21 (394). *"A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench."*

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



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