

Sunday, Jul 12, 2020

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Tell me what you see

Most stories aren't very mysterious. Even so-called mysteries have predictable plots that we anticipate before they unfold. We know, for example, that the fellow wandering into the cemetery at dusk is going to meet a bad end, and the storyteller knows that we know. It's all part of the fun. When reading Bible parables, the meaning is rarely mysterious. Seeds fall on different soil, reap different results. No surprise there. A parable's mystery isn't in not knowing, but in not seeing. What kind of soil are we? What seed has been planted in us, awaiting its harvest?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:10-11; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23 (103). *"The disciples approached him and said, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?'"*

Monday, Jul 13, 2020

Looking for prophets in our midst

Many of us lately have learned what it's like to be held back by illness, as the coronavirus brought about grinding halts to life as we knew it. Blessed Charlie Rodríguez Santiago, a candidate to be the first Puerto Rican saint, was prevented from getting an education because of severe chronic illness. He died on this day in 1963 at the age of 44—and left behind a legacy of liturgical renewal in the church. He advocated for use of vernacular languages and increased lay participation—which came to be shortly after his death with Vatican II reforms. How can you too be a prophet for hope and change in our own disease-challenged days?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 1:10-17; Matthew 10:34-11:1 (389). *"Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."*

Tuesday, Jul 14, 2020

MEMORIAL OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA, VIRGIN

Indigenous help to heal the world

Kateri Tekakwitha—born Mohawk and Algonquin in 1656, canonized in 2012—is a fitting intercessor for coronavirus, though she is actually patron saint of ecology. Losing her family to the same smallpox epidemic that left her disfigured and half blind, Kateri knew firsthand the suffering wrought by disease. Perhaps her empathy helps account for so many miraculous healings attributed to her to this day. But Kateri's love of the earth may also inspire our continued care of the environment, which has seen healing of its own during human quarantine. Kateri, pray for us on all fronts!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 7:1-9; Matthew 11:20-24 (390). *"Will you be exalted to heaven?"*

Wednesday, Jul 15, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BONAVENTURE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Love finds the common ground

Saint Bonaventure (1221-74) was born Giovanni di Fidanza to a noble Italian family and joined the Franciscan order at the age of 22. By then, Francis had been dead for 17 years, and conflict had arisen among his followers as they tried to imitate the poverty Francis embraced. Bonaventure, who brought gifts of intellect and organization, emerged as a leader and teacher who helped the order resolve differences and renew its purpose. He encouraged a

Franciscan detachment from wealth and practiced it himself, but not at the expense of generous love. Bring a spirit of love to the conflicts you face today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 10:5-7, 13b-16; Matthew 11:25-27 (391). *"What you have hidden from the learned and clever, you have revealed to the merest children."*

Thursday, Jul 16, 2020

Easy does it

Today's readings promise both a smooth path (the first reading) and a light yoke (the gospel). But Christianity does not promise comfort and ease. Rather, our faith is founded on the idea that Christ conquered death *through* suffering. One of our primary symbols is the crucifix, an ongoing reminder that Christ offers victory over suffering and death but first experienced them. Ultimately, our rough paths and burdens do find rest in Christ. If you are tempted today to give in to ridicule, anger, despair, or a sin that weighs you down, try to "put on the yoke of Christ," and see if your mood lightens.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19; Matthew 11:28-30 (392). *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Friday, Jul 17, 2020

Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel

The Greek words *Kyrie eleison* are some of the most ancient—and powerful—words of the Christian liturgy: "Lord, have mercy." Typically we find these words in the penitential rite where the church asks God's mercy and forgiveness. But these words are not just for penance; they are words of life and encouragement to the weary soul. It's as if we are saying, "Look kindly upon me." This call for mercy is not just directed toward God; it is also part of the fabric of our relationships with ourselves and the world. We can look kindly upon ourselves, instead of berating ourselves for what we didn't get done. We can look kindly upon those around us filled with fear and hatred. We can look kindly upon the fragile earth and God's good creation. How is mercy calling you?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8; Matthew 12:1-8 (393). *"If you knew what this meant, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned these innocent men."*

Saturday, Jul 18, 2020

A tireless voice for justice

During the era of European conquest of the Americas, Native American people were typically regarded as savages who must be "conquered" and coerced into conversion or pushed aside. Bartolomé de Las Casas is remembered today as one of the few voices opposing the dominant ideology of religious and secular leaders alike. Appalled by colonial cruelties in the Caribbean in the 1500s, he doggedly advocated for the rights of indigenous people for some 50 years, urging an end to the cruelties and coerced conversions. Remember de Las Casas and make justice a central part of your own witness.

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 2:1-5; Matthew 12:14-21 (394). *"They oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance."*

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



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