

Sunday, Jun 13, 2021

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Surprising yields ahead

Many have been glad to shake off the past year with good riddance. We're quick to write off difficult situations as sinkholes of our personal efforts, with nothing to show for our suffering. Every plague, war, and famine of history has caused its multitude of lost lives, endless grief, and economic devastation. Yet Jesus promises us that underneath the soil of human experience, the kingdom of God is always at work, pushing new life and fresh hope into existence. Many are working hard right this moment to promote a new vision for humanity. Commit to the new seed of Kingdom Coming.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34 (92). *"And through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how."*

Monday, Jun 14, 2021

Make an offering

It is fitting that today is both Flag Day in the United States and World Blood Donor Day. Many have shed their blood for the ideals a flag represents, and while most of us are not called to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country, many of us can make the small sacrifice of donating blood to save the lives of others. In some areas, the blood supply has become low because of fewer blood donations during the pandemic, and blood donation remains essential everywhere. If you are able to donate, or be supportive of someone who can, it will contribute to our much-needed healing in these hurting times.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10; Matthew 5:38-42 (365). *"Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow."*

Tuesday, Jun 15, 2021

With respect to elders

It's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Pope Francis marked the observance last year by describing a shameful and painfully obvious truth: "The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that our societies are not organized well enough to make room for the elderly, with proper respect for their dignity and frailty. When the elderly are not cared for, there is no future for the young." Eighty percent of COVID deaths have been people 65 or older. What does your parish or local community do to support and engage seniors? If programs are not in place, can you help initiate them?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; Matthew 5:43-48 (366). *"I say this not by way of command, but to test the genuineness of your love by your concern for others."*

Wednesday, Jun 16, 2021

Be well intentioned

Jesus' admonition to perform good deeds in private and pray alone in our rooms can be difficult to figure out when we belong to a church that calls the community's public gathering for Mass the "source and summit of faith." So here's the deal: Jesus isn't telling us to hide our faith but instead to check out *why* we do what we do. He frowns on giving alms to get attention or making a big public display of our prayer, as if to prove we are closer to God

than our neighbor. Instead, we are called to pray, fast, and give alms simply to draw closer to our Lord. In public or private, let's pray with the best of intentions.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (367). *"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites."*

Thursday, Jun 17, 2021

Time to move beyond temptation

The Lord's Prayer, introduced in today's gospel, is the best-known Christian prayer the world over. Two years ago, a change in the way French Catholics say the prayer made headlines. The new translation avoids "lead us not into temptation" in favor of "do not let us fall into temptation." The point is that God doesn't lead us to sin. Rather, God gives us the strength to resist it, overcome it, learn from it, move beyond it. The next time you pray the great prayer, picture the Creator extending a hand to pull you away from sin into grace and light.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 11:1-11; Matthew 6:7-15 (368). *"This is how you are to pray: 'Our Father who art in heaven . . .'"*

Friday, Jun 18, 2021

Get some rest

Saint Augustine of Hippo captures the human condition perfectly when he says in his *Confessions*: "Lord, . . . our heart is restless until it rests in you." Christian prayer practices are designed to protect us from spirit-dulling anxiety and bring us to the peace of Christ. Try meditating on these words from Saint Francis de Sales for starters: "The same Eternal Father who cares for you today will take good care of you tomorrow and every day of your life. Either he will shield you from suffering, or he will give you the unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all useless thoughts, vain dreads, and anxious imaginations."

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 11:18, 21-30; Matthew 6:19-23 (369). *"Store up treasures in heaven."*

Saturday, Jun 19, 2021

MEMORIAL OF ROMUALD, ABBOT

A simple practice for inner peace

Romuald was a 10th-century Italian monk and teacher. He started life as a wealthy aristocrat but soon found his life of pursuing comfort and pleasure unsatisfying. He sought refuge in a monastery and discovered peace as a monk. Wishing to help others achieve fulfillment, he founded the Camaldolese Order of monks and established several monasteries, instructing the monks to practice intellectual stillness and interior receptivity in meditation. "Take every opportunity you can to sing the Psalms in your heart," he wrote in his rule, "and to understand them with your mind." Take a moment today and give it a try.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10; Matthew 6:24-34 (370). *"Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself."*

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



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