

Sunday, Jun 27, 2021

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

God is the champion of life

We're made for immortality. Christianity celebrates that death has no sting and life has no end. Our tenacious possession of the lives we're given is a sign of our refusal to accept death as the last word on the subject of our lives. We're impatient with limitations, reject gloom-and-doom projections, and insist on second opinions when the news is grim. We relentlessly cling to hope despite the odds of our predicament. God is on our side in this stubborn grip we have on life. God intends for death itself to pass away. Put your resources at the service of life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43 (98). *"God did not make death, nor does [God] rejoice in the destruction of the living."*

Monday, Jun 28, 2021

MEMORIAL OF IRENAEUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

We're part of the Lord's great chain of being

It's fun to consider "six degrees of separation"—the theory that everyone on Earth is connected to any other person by a chain of five acquaintances. Perhaps you even know how you are connected to someone famous. Imagine being only three degrees separated from Jesus! Saint Irenaeus is known for that claim. He studied under Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the apostle John. We may be countless more degrees removed than Irenaeus, but all Christians are part of the chain that goes back to our Lord because we're the beneficiaries of what's been passed down the links along the way—as well as being links ourselves to the future. Keep those connections strong.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 18:16-33; Matthew 8:18-22 (377). *"Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."*

Tuesday, Jun 29, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES

Call me by my new name

Before Jesus, they were Simon and Saul; afterward, Peter and Paul. In the great biblical tradition, both experienced a name change to signify God's call to a new and greater destiny. They became the two pillars of the church. Jesus gave Peter the "keys" to unlock the "kingdom of God," on Earth as it is in heaven—the Kingdom Jesus preached about for three years. Paul received a "sword," the "sword of the Spirit" that's the word of God—which Paul used as he spread the gospel to new lands. Is there something new you can do for God today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 12:1-11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19 (591). *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Wednesday, Jun 30, 2021

You are part of God's agenda

Prayer has many forms and many expressions: It turns our hearts and minds to God with a desire to praise, to request, to give thanks, or to intercede on behalf of others. Prayer is conversation with God; sitting in silence with God; sharing with God every hope and fear we carry. But as Saint Thomas Aquinas reminds us, "We set forth our petitions before God, not in order to make known to Him our needs and desires, but rather so that we ourselves may

realize that in these things it is necessary to turn to God for help." Go ahead, place your concerns on God's desk. There's always space.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 21:5, 8-20a; Matthew 8:28-34 (379). *"When the poor one called out, the LORD heard."*

Thursday, Jul 01, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JUNÍPERO SERRA, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS, MISSIONARY

Man on a mission

Today the church honors Saint Junípero Serra, the Spanish Franciscan missionary who tirelessly evangelized native peoples in California in the late 1700s, founding the first nine of 21 missions in the region. His sainthood is not without controversy since missionaries were enmeshed in the brutal Spanish conquest of the Americas, but Serra's record also shows he endured many hardships late in life for the sake of the gospel, genuinely loved the indigenous people, and defended their rights against the worst Spanish abuses. His memorial is a good time to learn about and pray for greater justice for Native Americans and all Indigenous Peoples.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 22:1b-19; Matthew 9:1-8 (380). *"He then said to the paralytic, 'Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.'"*

Friday, Jul 02, 2021

Pray for us sinners

Sometimes denial, shame, and fear keep us from recognizing the harmful effects of our sin. Pope Francis encourages us to give even our sin over to God. As he put it in a 2013 homily, "In my own life, I have so often seen God's merciful countenance, his patience; I have also seen so many people find the courage to enter the wounds of Jesus by saying to him: Lord, I am here, accept my poverty, hide my sin in your wounds, wash it away with your blood. And I have always seen that God did just this—he accepted them, consoled them, cleansed them, loved them." Draw close to Jesus and be comforted.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 23:1-4, 19; 24:1-8, 62-67; Matthew 9:9-13 (381). *"Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."*

Saturday, Jul 03, 2021

FEAST OF THOMAS, APOSTLE

Let doubt deepen your faith

We have come to know today's saint as "Doubting Thomas," but in terms of his legacy, it was the missionary zeal that grew out of his doubt that endures. According to tradition, Thomas traveled far, reaching the Malabar Coast of southwest India, where he established a community still known today as "Saint Thomas Christians." A more diverse mix could not be found: the Nazranis, as they are called, are said to be "Indian in culture, Christian in faith, and Syrian in liturgy," with a dash of Jewish and Hindu influence for good measure. Your doubt can be the catalyst to a faith that endures and leaves a rich legacy. Ask God to help your unbelief!

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 2:19-22; John 20:24-29 (593). *"You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones."*

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



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