

Sunday, Jun 03, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI)

I give myself to you

It's pleasant to enjoy the affection of neighbors, friends, and assorted relatives. But some forms of love go beyond congenial, all the way to profound. Take the love between two people that compels them to vow a lifelong bond. How about the devotion of parents for their children that makes no sacrifice seem too great, no burden too much to bear? Men and women alike pledge their lives to the church, and many others dedicate themselves to serving the common good by means of their professions. To whom or to what do you say: "Take it, this is my life"?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 24:3-8; Hebrews 9:11-15; Mark 14:12-16, 22-26 (168). "He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is my body.'"

Monday, Jun 04, 2018

Is that you?

"That's me," one 10-year-old insists to another as they watch an action movie, choosing to be the character who is the most powerful, the most beautiful, or even the goofiest. A good storyteller knows that listeners need to identify with the characters, but it can be a shock if *your* character turns out to be the villain, as when the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders realize that Jesus' upside-down parables are calling them out. Jesus faced opposition—even violence—when his critics realized they were being challenged. That's what Jesus does—he challenges your assumptions about yourself. When by your own lack of compassion, your injustice, you are confronted by the hard truth of the gospel, you still have to say, "That's me."

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Peter 1:2-7; Mark 12:1-12 (353). "They were seeking to arrest him . . . for they realized that he had addressed the parable to them."

Tuesday, Jun 05, 2018

MEMORIAL OF BONIFACE, BISHOP, MARTYR

A gospel for hungry hearts and minds

As Christians we've not always done evangelization well. Saint Boniface (c. 680-754), a Benedictine monk and bishop, had a mixed history in this regard. There are stories about him literally trampling the religious traditions of other cultures but also about him embracing the customs of people and inviting them to see their own lives in light of the gospel. What's your take on evangelization? Hammer or gospel in hand? Consider the words of the U.S. bishops in their statement *Go and Make Disciples*: "Evangelization happens when the word of Jesus speaks to people's hearts and minds. Needing no trickery or manipulation, evangelization can happen only when people accept the gospel freely, as the 'good news' it is meant to be, because of the power of the gospel message and the accompanying grace of God."

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Peter 3:12-15a, 17-18; Mark 12:13-17 (354). "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord . . ."

Wednesday, Jun 06, 2018

MEMORIAL OF NORBERT, BISHOP

Encounters of the third kind

Did you know there are members of Catholic religious orders who are laypeople? Some of them belong to what are called third, or tertiary, orders, and most major religious orders include them.

Members are men and women who do not necessarily live in community but nonetheless participate in the good works of the larger order to which they belong. Saint Norbert was one of the first church figures to initiate a third order. He prepared a set of religious practices that those in secular life could follow. If you feel yourself drawn to a religious lifestyle despite being firmly anchored in a secular life, explore the possibilities third orders offer.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12; Mark 12:18-27 (355). "He is not God of the dead but of the living."

Thursday, Jun 07, 2018

Work on your sainthood

Lots of saints walked the earth who haven't yet claimed a date on the church calendar. Even if they never do, that doesn't take away from their brilliant witness. Consider Anna Dengal, who graduated from medical school in England in 1919. Convinced that her skills could be better used in India, she became the only doctor serving 10,000 sick and dying women and children. Realizing she could "love her neighbor" better with a little help, she established the Medical Mission Sisters. Their goal remains "to be a healing presence at the heart of a wounded world." Share the mission: Visit the sick.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Mark 12:28-34 (356). " 'To love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Friday, Jun 08, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The heart of the matter

If you were raised in a Catholic home, you probably have a memory of a statue or picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. You may have looked at it a thousand times without really "seeing" it. Take a moment today to recollect the image as vividly as possible. Recall that the heart is the symbol for, among other things, love, charity, understanding, compassion, and courage. Remember that it is a key organ in the human body, connecting the spiritual with the material, the mind with the body, the intellect with emotions. Then reflect on the ways that the love of Jesus has sustained you every day of your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8c-9; Ephesians 3:8-12, 14-19; John 19:31-37 (171). "One soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out."

Saturday, Jun 09, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Love with no strings attached

What would it be like to have an "immaculate heart"? Might it be to have a heart that loved unconditionally? When we are honest about it, much of what we call "love" is actually a sort of *quid pro quo*, this-for-that exchange of affection. We love those who love us in return, who treat us well, who respect us. There's nothing wrong with that, but can we open our hearts a bit more to embrace those who do not return our love in equal measure? Can we go so far as to love our enemies? A tall order but one worth striving for—an immaculate heart that loves unconditionally, as a mother loves her child, as Mary loved her son. Practice loving without conditions. When you pray today, ask for an immaculate heart.

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 4:1-8 (358); Luke 2:41-51 (573). "His mother kept all these things in her heart."

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



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