

Sunday, Jun 10, 2018

TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Why we hide

A psychologist explained something fascinating about shame: No one can put it inside us without our consent. Shame doesn't enter from the outside but responds from the inside. Those seeking to embarrass us are frustrated if we refuse their attempt to impart shame with the slap of a hand or a word. If we accept shame, it's because deep down we're already carrying it. So Adam, guilty of disloyalty to God, is shamed by his newfound nakedness. Yet Jesus, insulted, beaten, stripped, and humiliated, remains clothed in honor at the cross. Got shame? We've got a sacrament for that.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13—5:1; Mark 3:20-35 (89). *"I heard you in the garden, but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself."*

Monday, Jun 11, 2018

MEMORIAL OF BARNABAS, APOSTLE

A stand-up guy

Do you have trouble standing up to peer pressure? Learn from Saint Barnabas. Though he wasn't one of the original apostles, he stood up to Peter and James and others in defense of Paul, who had once persecuted Christians but then wanted to be one. And when even Peter was reluctant to fraternize with converted gentiles, Barnabas held that Jesus' message was meant for everyone. He was a man whose word was good, not only to be relied on but—because he was a great preacher—to be inspired by. Next time you're feeling peer pressure, pray for the help of Barnabas.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12 (580; Gospel 359). *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."*

Tuesday, Jun 12, 2018

You are the salt of the earth

Salt is such an ordinary, inexpensive, and easily found substance in most cases nowadays that you can fail to fully grasp the profound meaning of Jesus' famous metaphor. Consider these facts. Once known as "white gold," salt is necessary for human life. It preserves, purifies, and enhances the flavor of food. It made civilization possible. Wars have been waged over supplies of salt; it has been taxed, hoarded, traded, and used as currency; and it helped galvanize Mohandas Gandhi's nonviolent movement for India's independence from Britain. When Jesus compares his disciples to salt of the earth, he is really saying: "Your life and presence matter. In fact, you are more than valuable—you are essential." Be alert for opportunities to be salt for the world today.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 17:7-16; Matthew 5:13-16 (360). *"If salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?"*

Wednesday, Jun 13, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANTHONY OF PADUA, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Give what you receive

Saint Francis of Assisi had a healthy skepticism about academic pursuits. In the Middle Ages the accolades a noted scholar might enjoy could leave gospel poverty in the dust. When Anthony of Padua asked to join Francis' new "Order of Penance," however, Francis saw that Anthony was able to combine brilliance and

oratorical power with fidelity to the gospel and simplicity. Francis even welcomed Anthony to bring his precious books with him—they were the tools of his trade—and entrusted to his care the training of brothers seeking to become priests. You may find yourself juggling values that seem at odds with each other, like being a bread-earner *and* a caring mom or dad. Saint Anthony knew that the gifts of God—even those most esteemed like intelligence, power, and wealth—are still gifts as long as they're balanced with humility.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 18:20-39; Matthew 5:17-19 (361). *"Let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant."*

Thursday, Jun 14, 2018

Carry on the flag

The American flag was adopted on this day in 1777, and ever since it has been a cherished symbol of everything this country holds dear. As President Calvin Coolidge observed, "It represents our peace and security, our civil and political liberty, our freedom of religious worship, our family, our friends, our home." But, he noted, it is equally a symbol of responsibility. As a nation the United States has its share of problems, disagreements, and failures. Today is a good day to reflect on the sacrifices your ancestors made and consider how you might carry on their work so that your grandchildren may live in the freedom the Stars and Stripes proclaim.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 18:41-46; Matthew 5:20-26 (362).

"Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Friday, Jun 15, 2018

Hearing a who

The prophet Elijah had a lot on his plate. Defending the one true God, battling kings and even other prophets, and going through quite a bit of hardship in the process. And when he went to talk with God on God's own mountain, conditions were not calm. The wind blew strong enough to split rocks. Then an earthquake rolled the ground. Oh, and there was fire, too—did we mention that? But God was not "in" the wind, the quake, or the fire. Rather God was in a "tiny whispering sound." *That* was what awed Elijah and led him to cover his face. Sometimes the voice of God isn't found in spectacular special effects but in the smallest, quietest way. Can you hear it?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-16; Matthew 5:27-32 (363).

"After the fire was a sound of sheer silence."

Saturday, Jun 16, 2018

Truth or consequences

The taking of an oath has a long history and some curious customs, such as an ancient Jewish practice of placing one's hand under the thigh of the person to whom one swears the oath.

Today you raise your hand or place it on a sacred book. But as Jesus pointed out, no oaths should be necessary. All your words should be trustworthy. Be a person who keeps your word; the confidence, trust, and respect of others will follow. And as Mark Twain pointed out: "Tell the truth and you don't have to remember anything."

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:19-21; Matthew 5:33-37 (364). *"Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes' and your 'No' mean 'No.'"*

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



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