

Sunday, Nov 04, 2018

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Silly love songs?

Love is all you need. So say every generation's love songs since the biblical Song of Songs was put to papyrus. When asked to choose the primary commandment, Jesus chose love of God and neighbor. Love is clearly that fundamental. But it's far more than a feeling. The mandate to love doesn't dictate our emotions, but rather our priorities. How do we put God and neighbor first, in each decision, with every expenditure of time and resource? If love begins to routinely triumph over self-interest, how might worship, family, society, and world be transformed?

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 6:2-6; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 12:28b-34 (152). *"To love [God] with all your heart . . . is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."*

Monday, Nov 05, 2018

Some of my best friends

You've probably noticed in reading the gospels and listening to Sunday sermons that the Pharisees come off as the bad guys in a lot of gospel stories. Recent scholars suggest, however, that tensions between Jesus and the Pharisees may have been exaggerated when the gospel accounts were later written down, reflecting conflicts between early Christians and Jews. In fact, a number of other New Testament figures, including Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and perhaps Saint Paul himself, were Pharisees who ended up devoted to the cause of Jesus. We don't have to consider those who differ with us as enemies—they may end up being some of our best friends.

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 2:1-4; Luke 14:12-14 (485). *"On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees."*

Tuesday, Nov 06, 2018

Gotta hand it to them

Take note the next time you practice charity or drop a coin in the cup of someone begging: How will you feel if they don't say "thank you"? Jesus' advice to hold a banquet for those who can't possibly repay us challenges our deepest instincts. It is natural to shower our generosity on friends and loved ones. Jesus challenges us to go further. True charity has no strings attached. Can we reach out a hand to others even if we come up empty-handed?

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 14:15-24 (486). *"Bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame."*

Wednesday, Nov 07, 2018

Lend a hand

In the Okinawan language two characters make up the word *karate*: *kara* ("empty") and *te* ("hand"). The name of this martial art, then, is literally "the way of the empty hand." Tadashi Nakamura, the founder of the Seido form of karate, said: "When we love freely, we can give and share everything. We need hold on to nothing. Our hands can be empty." Jesus was no martial artist, but nonetheless his way of life was one of an "open hand": to empty himself in order to give himself. Those who would call themselves his followers should be ready to do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 2:12-18; Luke 14:25-33 (487). *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."*

Thursday, Nov 08, 2018

Do what you can

Mother Teresa used to say that she did not add, she subtracted—and she was not talking about arithmetic skills. You'll never win at the game of measuring the success of service in numbers, she was pointing out. The total of those in need will always outrun your efforts to catch up with it. Though her Missionaries of Charity have helped hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of people, they cannot reach everyone. If you see, as she did, every person to whom you give aid to be another person subtracted from the mass of suffering, the numbers game changes—especially if you consider each one of them to be a child of God. In trying to feed the world's hungers, you don't have to do everything, but you can do something.

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 3:3-8a; Luke 15:1-10 (488). *"What woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it?"*

Friday, Nov 09, 2018

FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

Living stones

How often, when we speak of *church*, we have to clarify whether we mean the faith community or the building where that community gathers. As we celebrate the Lateran Basilica—the pope's own cathedral, the mother of all churches—we remember that human beings need things that appeal to the senses to remind us of spiritual values. Saint Augustine says that when the community of faith gathers "they are hewn out, as it were, from mountains and forests, like stones and timber; but by catechizing, Baptism, and instruction they are . . . shaped, squared, and planed by the hands of the workers and artisans" and finally are made into a house for the Lord, "fitted together through love."

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezra 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22 (671). *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"*

Saturday, Nov 10, 2018

MEMORIAL OF LEO THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

You want Leo on your side

Attila, called the "scourge of God," had sacked Milan and set out to attack Rome in A.D. 452. The Emperor Valentinian III hid behind the walls of a remote castle, and panic seized the capital. In this climate of fear, Pope Leo set out unarmed to meet Attila, and somehow induced him to turn back. A few years later the Vandal king Genseric invaded Rome, but Leo was able to persuade him not to rape and pillage. Leo then set about repairing the damage of the invasion by distributing alms. The next time you find yourself short on courage, call on the memory of this great hero of the tradition. Chances are, whatever you are facing can't be any worse than Attila!

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 4:10-19; Luke 16:9-15 (490). *"The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones."*

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



©2018 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. **Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.**