

Sunday, Sep 01, 2019

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A planet worth praying for

Four years ago, Pope Francis declared today the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. He inaugurated a season of praying for our delicate biosphere in peril from the effects of climate change, which lasts until the feast of the patron saint of creation, Francis of Assisi, on October 4. Consider how you might make a special commitment to the earth this month: perhaps abstaining from meat, the production of which consumes 80 percent of agricultural land? Avoiding throwaway plastic bottles and utensils? Supporting earth-friendly companies and causes? Add a daily prayer for Mother Earth.

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a; Luke 14:1, 7-14 (126). *"The mind of a sage appreciates proverbs, and an attentive ear is the joy of the wise."*

Monday, Sep 02, 2019

Labor deserves dignity

As Americans celebrate Labor Day, we do well to recall that Catholic teaching honors work but reminds us that work is to serve humans, not humans to serve work. The human needs of those who labor must never be shunted aside. From the moment he announced his mission—a moment recalled in today's gospel—Jesus expressed concern for those oppressed in any form, be it in employment or otherwise. If your work feels oppressive, know that Catholic tradition upholds your right to a just and healthy work life.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 4:16-30 (431). *"He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives."*

Tuesday, Sep 03, 2019

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

Pay it forward

While we know today's saint as Gregory the Great, he could just as well be called Gregory the Good—a man with a good heart and priorities in the right place. He presided at a time when the church was acquiring great wealth through lavish donations but looked upon that wealth as rightly belonging to the poor. He saw the church acting as its steward and strove to create a vast system of alms. Food was dispensed monthly to the indigent, and to those too ill or infirm to come for it, he dispatched an army of monks to deliver it daily. Strive to imitate the great and good Gregory in your attitude toward all you possess.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11; Luke 4:31-37 (432). *"They were all amazed and said to one another, 'What is there about his word?'"*

Wednesday, Sep 04, 2019

Barging in with a healing

Imagine being at home, sick as a dog, feeling miserable, and your son-in-law (the future Saint Peter) drops in with his friends, who are no doubt hungry and looking for lunch. Then one of them, this Jesus fellow, takes your hand and stands you up, and suddenly you feel yourself again, energized to serve them. Maybe you should have this Jesus fellow over more often! He makes

everything better. When's the last time you asked Jesus to come into your life and give you a helping hand?

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:1-8; Luke 4:38-44 (433). *"He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately and waited on them."*

Thursday, Sep 05, 2019

It's a divine call to dive in

The Lake of Gennesaret, also known as the Sea of Galilee, is a heart-shaped body of water at the heart of Jesus' ministry. Jesus called the first disciples, Luke says, by wowing a few of its fishermen; the huge catch nearly broke their nets. At the end of John's gospel, the miracle is repeated as Jesus—not recognized in resurrected form—again tells his disciples to lower their nets. Both accounts bookend a life of teaching, preaching, and healing, where Jesus wins the trust of his beloved by leading them into deeper waters, delivering improbable results that boggle the mind but stir the soul. Trust where Jesus asks you to go, into the depth of your heart and abilities.

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:9-14; Luke 5:1-11 (434). *"Put out into the deep water."*

Friday, Sep 06, 2019

Be a joyful believer

Pious Jews in Jesus' time were meticulous about following the rules, and there were a lot of rules. Jesus, however, was a rule-breaker, a boundary-crosser. He could be deadly serious but also the life of the party. While the pious felt threatened by his unorthodox behavior, the common folk loved him. Rev. James Martin, author of *Between Heaven and Mirth*, points out, "We feel drawn to religious leaders with a sense of humor. It shows us that they understand their essential poverty of spirit and their own reliance on God. It shows humility, which is also essential in the spiritual life. You take God seriously, Jesus seriously, and the gospel seriously, but you shouldn't take yourself too seriously." Time to lighten up a bit?

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 5:33-39 (435). *"Jesus answered them, 'Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?'"*

Saturday, Sep 07, 2019

Soul food

Body and soul both matter to God who chose to take on human form. In fact, Jesus' ministry was dominated by healing and feeding. He even sometimes broke the religious rules of his day to tend to the physical needs of others. In doing so, he modeled how we should take care of our neighbors and gave us a new rulebook: The corporal works of mercy. So feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead, and give to the poor. Taking care of the body does a soul good.

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:21-23; Luke 6:1-5 (436). *"The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."*

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



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