

Sunday, Apr 08, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER; DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Who taught you mercy?

Moral leaders agree that the number one lesson we need to teach children is mercy. If the next generation is to survive in an ever-shrinking world full of very different cultures, the willingness to seek understanding and to dialogue across worldviews is key. The starting point for that kind of empathetic listening is a heart open to compassion. Compassion literally means “to bear with”: to see and feel another’s burdens. Who taught you mercy, and how will someone learn it from you?

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 4:32-35; 1 John 5:1-6; John 20:19-31 (44).
“The community of believers was of one mind and heart, and . . . they had everything in common.”

Monday, Apr 09, 2018

SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

The three best words

Mary is the mother of the church and the model of all Christians. At the message of an angel, she believed beyond all reason and offered her life in service of God’s plan. Her response, “let it be,” is the answer of every disciple who trusts in God’s word to make all things new. In the season of Lent, God invites us to believe that we, too, are called to that service. Even though we are sinners—“how can this be?”—we live in hope of God’s forgiveness and trust that God will work through us to bring about the fulfillment.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38 (545). “Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’”

Tuesday, Apr 10, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

Be prepared to testify

In the Book of Acts we are told that “with great power the apostles bore witness to Resurrection.” In fact, said Benedictine monk Columba Stewart in *National Geographic*, the “apostles were the movement’s cutting edge, spreading the message across the vast trade network of the ancient world and leaving small Christian communities in their paths.” This missionary zeal is passed on to each new generation of Christians, but it takes different forms. Today, although many Christians still travel to foreign lands to serve the poor and give witness to Christ, believers are also encouraged to evangelize—spread the gospel—within their own homes, parishes, and local communities. How is your evangelization going? Hint: They should know you are Christian by your love.

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 4:32-37; John 3:7b-15 (268). “We speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen.”

Wednesday, Apr 11, 2018

MEMORIAL OF STANISLAUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR

Whom do you follow?

Like Archbishop Óscar Romero of El Salvador in the 20th century and Thomas à Becket of England in the 12th century, Saint Stanislaus (c. 1030-79) was, according to tradition, killed in church, in this case while celebrating Mass. Stanislaus’ murderer was the king of Poland, with whom he had a number of disputes over land and the king’s harsh rule. Throughout history the church has come into conflict with the powers that be. Jesus, of course, was put to death by the religious and political authorities of his time. Dorothy Day, of Catholic Worker fame, wrote in 1966: “Every new

development for the last three centuries has brought [human beings] closer to the state of affairs in which absolutely nothing would be recognized in the whole world as possessing a claim to obedience except the authority of the State.” But for Christians, she said, Christ must be our guide. Who’s yours?

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 5:17-26; John 3:16-21 (269). “But whoever lives the truth comes to the light.”

Thursday, Apr 12, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

Listen to the right voice

If it’s all up for grabs, why pay attention to what others teach or preach when everyone has their own relationship with God? After all, the Bible says, “Obey God, not humans.” Well, yes—and no. Indeed the buck does stop with God in that we are oriented by our nature to listen to God and respond to God’s call. But there’s a lot out there to compete with our natural inclinations—fear, vulnerability, peer pressure, misinformation, and more—all of which can provide compelling alternative messages. Fortunately God graces us with not only our own lights but scripture and the church to give us a better sense of how to navigate. Think about the ways in your own life that God uses to connect with you.

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 5:27-33; John 3:31-36 (270). “We must obey God rather than men.”

Friday, Apr 13, 2018

MEMORIAL OF MARTIN I, POPE, MARTYR

Gone should not be forgotten

Saint Martin is the last pope in history to be honored as a martyr, but his death for the faith did not occur quickly. After being elected pope in 649 he made enemies by opposing a heresy and condemning the emperor for supporting that heresy. As a result, while lying sick, Martin was kidnapped and carted off to the East, where he was jailed and eventually exiled. During this time he was given poor food, not allowed to wash regularly, and came down with dysentery. On top of that he was ignored by his church back home. “I wonder . . . at those who belong to the church of Saint Peter for the little concern they show for one of their body,” he wrote. Let this saint’s experience motivate you to perform the corporal works of mercy denied him—like clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and visiting the prisoner.

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15 (271). “There was not a needy person among them.”

Saturday, Apr 14, 2018

EASTER WEEKDAY

It is I

Jesus had sent the disciples on ahead of him in a boat. During the night the going got pretty rough. In the midst of their struggle—remember, they were rowing—Jesus came toward them on the water, a startling development even though it meant rescue. Jesus allayed their fears with three words: “It is I.” Actually, it’s only two, in Greek: “I am.” Sound familiar? They are the words God uses to identify himself at a number of places in scripture. So Jesus isn’t merely saying, “Don’t worry, it’s me.” He’s declaring that he is God but also that God simply *is*—the foundation of everything. Next time you find yourself rowing against the waves of trouble, remember you’re always on solid ground with God.

TODAY’S READINGS: Acts 6:1-7; John 6:16-21 (272). “He said to them, ‘It is I. Do not be afraid.’”

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



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