

Sunday, Sep 15, 2019

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

We're all in the story

A foolish, reckless kid. His heartbroken parent. An indignant older sibling. We find ourselves at various points of this family triangle over the years. First we're the brazen, half-hatched adult, trying everything at once just because we can. Later we may exchange roles more than once between the grieving elder—hoping against hope for a loved one causing all the trouble—and the aggrieved one, who thinks any show of compassion is outrageous and unearned. No matter who we are right now, the table is set, and the party is starting. Can we afford not to be there?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-32 (132). *"This son of mine was dead, and has come to life again."*

Monday, Sep 16, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CORNELIUS, POPE, AND CYPRIAN, BISHOP, MARTYRS

Measure for measure

Saint Cornelius was elected pope in 251 during the persecutions of the Emperor Decius. Saint Cyprian of Carthage was a close friend. They and other church leaders faced a difficult question—should those who denied their faith to avoid martyrdom during the persecution be forgiven and received back into the church community? Under no circumstances, some argued. But Cornelius and Cyprian, both of whom would eventually face the martyrdom others fled, believed that if repentant, apostates, as they were called, should be welcomed back to the faith community. Show mercy to others so that mercy may be shown to you.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 7:1-10 (443). *"Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof."*

Tuesday, Sep 17, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ROBERT BELLARMINI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

As the world turns

The widely respected and deeply learned Robert Bellarmine, who holds the rarified title of a doctor of the church, ended up on the erroneous side of a major controversy, that which surrounded Copernicus' "heliocentric theory" that the earth revolved around the sun instead of the sun around the earth. He delivered a sanction to his friend Galileo in 1616 that eventually resulted in the great scientist being silenced and held under house arrest. Don't confuse religious faith with scientific fact. God works through nature, and has nothing to hide, so don't be afraid of new scientific information that challenges long-held misconceptions. God can handle the truth—God created it!

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Luke 7:11-17 (444). *"Beloved, this saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Therefore, a bishop must be irrefragable."*

Wednesday, Sep 18, 2019

Drop the criticism

One of the worst faults of folks in general is the tendency to regularly find fault in others. There are plenty of reasons we do it: It makes us feel better about our own limitations, and it's easy to dismiss someone who challenges us to be better if we criticize them. But Jesus wants us to build up, not tear down—build up the

kingdom of God, that is. And that project starts inside ourselves—not by beating ourselves up for what we did wrong, but by presenting our wrongs honestly to God and turning that same spirit of understanding outward to others.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 3:14-16; Luke 7:31-35 (445).

"Wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

Thursday, Sep 19, 2019

Reach out to the untouchables

Are we aware of the ways in which our society creates and perpetuates divisions and privileges based on gender, color, orientation, ability, income, religion? Jesus broke through such barriers, especially when interacting with women, but religious leaders preferred to see his actions as audacious and rebellious, while Jesus was instead modeling reciprocity and inclusivity. Wherever social constructs divide people, we are called to bridge the gap.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Luke 7:36-50 (446). *"If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him."*

Friday, Sep 20, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ANDREW KIM TAE-GÖN, PRIEST, AND PAUL CHÖNG HA-SANG AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Take nothing for granted

Never underestimate the power of books. Books smuggled out of China brought Christianity to Korea. The new community of faith was not welcomed by authorities, but that did not stop faithful Korean laymen and women from living their Catholic faith. Courageous and persistent, these 18th- and 19th-century lay leaders were persecuted, tortured, and beheaded. The church today honors the first Korean Catholic priest, Saint Andrew Kim Tae-gön, one of the many lay leaders, Saint Paul Chông Ha-sang, and their martyred companions. Take time today to pick up the Holy Book and consider what folks have sacrificed to spread the Good News within.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 6:2c-12; Luke 8:1-3 (447). *"Jesus journeyed . . . proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God."*

Saturday, Sep 21, 2019

FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST

Who do you see?

We are always sizing up other people, making judgements about them. This is normal. But sometimes, we end up putting people in boxes—and leaving them there. Not so with Jesus. Jesus saw through boxes, categories, and stereotypes. He saw the person. Look at Matthew. Lumped into the distasteful category of "tax collectors and sinners," Matthew wasn't exactly considered a shining example of discipleship by the community. Yet, Jesus saw more than that. He saw Matthew and was open to him—and not just to "minister to" or "convert" Matthew. Jesus drew close, inviting Matthew into his home to become a close companion and vital part of proclaiming the Good News. What happens when you truly see people?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643). *"Jesus said to him, 'Follow me.' And Matthew got up and followed him."*

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



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