

**Sunday, Feb 12, 2023**

### Create a genuine love story

No one ever said relationships were easy. Commitments, whether in marriage, religious life, or elsewhere, take spiritual insight to discern, patience to maintain, time to mature, and a whole lot of love to keep the engine moving on the tracks. Today's celebration of World Marriage Day is meant to support the development of a culture of life and love within our most fundamental relationships. As Pope Francis declared in *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love): "The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the church." Take the journey to joy and love. Work to make each relationship life-giving.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37 (76). "We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age."

**Monday, Feb 13, 2023**

### Make a petition, not a deal

It can be tempting, especially when we're desperate, to try to bargain with God: "If you do this one thing for me, I'll quit a bad habit forever and never miss Mass again." But that's not how our relationship with God works. For starters, Jesus told us not to bargain, but to simply ask for what we need (Matthew 7:7-11). God already knows what we need better than we do but wants us to ask anyway, persistently even—because a willingness to be vulnerable and share intimacy are central to any healthy relationship. For that reason, petitionary prayer isn't always easy. Open up with your longings and offer God your trust, rather than a deal.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Mark 8:11-13 (335). "Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

**Tuesday, Feb 14, 2023**

### Speak the language of love

More than 1,000 years before Vatican II—with its directive to translate the Latin liturgy into the vernacular—two missionary siblings, Cyril and Methodius, got the blessing of their pope to do the same for the Slavic people. In doing so, they created the Cyrillic alphabet. And as Pope John Paul II noted, they impacted not only the "history of the church, but also the civil and the political history of a great part of the European continent. . . . Cyril and Methodius [are] not only the apostles of the Slavic peoples but also the fathers of their culture." On this Valentine's Day, how can you translate love into your vernacular?

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10; Mark 8:14-21 (336). "Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened?"

**Wednesday, Feb 15, 2023**

### A pioneer priest who broke a color barrier

On this day in 1880, Augustus Tolton departed the United States on a holy mission: to enter a Catholic seminary as an African American. After several years of trying to become a priest stateside and experiencing rejection due to racism, Tolton's friends and allies successfully arranged for his passage to study at the Urban College in Rome, where he was ordained as the world's first openly African-American Catholic priest in 1886. He would return to his home state of Illinois, eventually settling in Chicago

where he founded the city's first black parish. He died of heat stroke in 1897 at the young age of 43 and has since been on the path to sainthood. In these times of continuing anti-black discrimination, may we look to his witness for hope and sustenance. Venerable Father Tolton, pray for us!

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 8:6-13, 20-22; Mark 22-26 (337). "My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people. Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones."

**Thursday, Feb 16, 2023**

### Take the path of Saint Francis

Christian theology has often encouraged human domination over creation. Saint Francis of Assisi had another view, one that has become more prominent in the church as the climate crisis intensifies. Franciscan Sister Rose Dowling expresses one facet of it: "The Earth with which we are so intimate is our primary teacher about who God is and how God wants to relate with us. . . . I see a God who has set into being a creation that continues to grow, evolve, become more conscious, become more complex. I see that as a human I, like the rest of creation, have the potential to grow and become *more* . . ." How will you become more conscious of all of creation today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 9:1-13; Mark 8:27-33 (338). "Peter said to him in reply, 'You are the Christ.'"

**Friday, Feb 17, 2023**

### To Mary, in times of sorrow

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order were 13th-century Florentine cloth merchants who banded together in prayer, solace, and community during politically tumultuous times. From the beginning, the Servites dedicated themselves to Mary, the Sorrowful Mother. Today their mission is to "gather in fraternal communion to be with those suffering and sorrowful." The Servites developed the three most common devotions to Our Lady of Sorrows, namely the Scapular of the Seven Dolours of Mary, the Novena to Our Sorrowful Mother, and the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows. In the closing prayer of the Rosary chaplet, we say, "Pray for us, O most sorrowful Virgin. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ." That is certainly a prayer to remember as we face each day's trials.

MEMORIAL OF THE SEVEN HOLY FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 11:1-9; Mark 8:34—9:1 (339). "Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it."

**Saturday, Feb 18, 2023**

### Good to be here

Were you ever so enamored of something that you just wanted it to last forever? That's what Peter was experiencing on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Jesus and his inner circle had to move on. They had to come down the mountain. There was more that needed to be done, people who needed to be served. In his 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI wrote, "Genuine progress . . . consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person, where the daily bread that each [one] receives reflects the glow of love and the helping hand of God." Pray that we become enamored by justice and help transfigure the world in Jesus' image!

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 11:1-7; Mark 9:2-13 (340). "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents."

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



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