

Sunday, Feb 05, 2023

Lord, hold the center together

Author and black Catholic educator Therese Wilson Favours wrote some rousing words for today's observance, the National Day of Prayer for the African American Family: "At times when the strain of life is heaviest within our families, 'holding-on power' is needed. Perseverance is the glue squeezed out from the soul and spoken in prayer at the midnight hour. Perseverance is the spiritual machine needed to break down the mountain and push through from weakness to strength. Lord, let me hold on just a little bit longer." Pray for black families and all families vulnerable to social forces that embattle them.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 58:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Matthew 5:13-16 (73). "Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."

Monday, Feb 06, 2023

Be nourished by his rain

Almost 350 years before the second atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki, it was the site of another tragedy—the place where 26 Christian martyrs were crucified on a hill, now known as Holy Mountain. The best known of the martyrs was Brother Paul Miki, a native Japanese member of the Jesuit order. While hanging on his cross, he continued to preach, expressing thanks to God that he was dying for teaching the doctrine of Christ and urging his listeners to "ask Christ to help you to become happy." He said he hoped his blood would fall as "fruitful rain." May his gentle words and brave witness nourish your prayer today.

MEMORIAL OF PAUL MIKI AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:1-19; Mark 6:53-56 (329). "They laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak."

Tuesday, Feb 07, 2023

How to help a good cause

Six individuals are in line to become the first African-American saint: Sister Thea Bowman, Julia Greeley, Mother Mary Lange, Mother Henriette Delille, Father Augustus Tolton, and Pierre Toussaint. The first three have the title "servant of God," indicating their canonization cause has been launched. The latter three have the title "venerable," meaning the pope recognizes their heroic virtue. Next would come beatification, allowing candidates to be called "blessed"; it includes the church's confirmation that they are in heaven—evidenced by at least two miracles from their intercession (unless they're martyred). Finally, comes canonization. Learn about these six and seek their intercession year-round.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:20-2:4a; Mark 7:1-13 (330). "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them."

Wednesday, Feb 08, 2023

Saintly guidance to help end modern-day slavery

This day marks the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking—also the feast of the first and only black woman saint in modern times: the Sudanese nun Josephine Bakhita. Kidnapped into slavery as a child by Arab traffickers in the late 19th century, she was converted to Islam before eventually being left in the care of Canossian Sisters in Italy. Her freedom soon came, and she lived out her later life as a Catholic and

eventually a nun. Today, an estimated 50 million people live in modern-day slavery. Christians are among the greatest combatants of the trade, and Saint Josephine was named the patron of survivors when she was canonized in 2000. May her faith continue to inspire those working to end the scourge, and may we join their efforts.

MEMORIAL OF JOSEPHINE BAKHITA, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17; Mark 7:14-23 (331).

"When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth."

Thursday, Feb 09, 2023

Seeing Adam's rib with fresh eyes

Traditionally, today's first reading has been used as a cudgel to keep women in divinely sanctioned inferiority. In the past century, scholars have looked differently at Genesis. Eve being created last doesn't imply inferiority, they say; human creation came after the rest of creation and traditionally was seen as implying superiority (which is actually another idea now under question). Also, many say a "partner" for Adam would imply equal status. Scripture interpretation depends heavily on the culture and on who is doing the interpreting. May the Holy Spirit inspire each one of us to advance human dignity.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 7:24-30 (332). "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

Friday, Feb 10, 2023

Togetherness has its virtue

Saint Scholastica (480-543) is the patron of Benedictine nuns and sisters. Along with her brother Saint Benedict of Nursia, she helped establish a rule for monastic living that emphasized prayer, work, and peace. Contemporary Benedictine women continue to follow this ancient set of precepts. The vision of monastic life, as expressed in the 2022 Centennial Prayer of the Benedictine Federation of Saint Scholastica is to "see Christ at the heart of all creation and at the center of our common life" and "share the peace of Christ, show the love of Christ, and make Christ known in our world." In what ways does your own life within family and community give witness to the peace and love of Christ?

MEMORIAL OF SCHOLASTICA, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:1-8; Mark 7:31-37 (333). "[Jesus] has done all things well."

Saturday, Feb 11, 2023

Our hands, God's hands

Today is World Day of the Sick, an observation introduced by Pope John Paul II as a way for believers to serve those suffering from illnesses. "Because Your hands, which touch the suffering flesh of Christ," said the sainted pope, "can be a sign of the merciful hands of the Father." Today and every day we pray for and care for the sick in our lives. On this day last year Pope Francis stated, "The ministry of consolation is a task for every baptized person, mindful of the word of Jesus: 'I was sick and you visited me.'"

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-24; Mark 8:1-10 (334). "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."

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



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