

Sunday, Aug 01, 2021

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

In it to win it?

Quid pro quo sounds like a pretty good deal. "This for that": the time-honored barter in which we swap resources or labor for room and board, if not a bit more. Consumer culture initiates all of us into the pursuit of the best trade. No surprise that early followers of Jesus imagined they were swapping their attention to his teaching for free food and even better opportunities down the road. Jesus seeks friends who share his vision, not churchgoers hoping for a celestial deal. When it comes to the religion quest, what's in it for you?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15; Ephesians 4:17, 20-24; John 6:24-35 (113). *"You are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled."*

Monday, Aug 02, 2021

MEMORIAL OF PETER JULIAN EYMARD, PRIEST

The communion of saints awaits you

Saint Peter Julian Eymard was a 19th-century French priest with a devotion to the Eucharist. He founded two religious institutes with a focus on Eucharistic Adoration: the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for men and the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament for women. The former prepared children for their First Communion and reached out to lapsed Catholics to bring them back to receiving Communion. He famously said, "You take Communion to become holy, not because you already are." Perhaps you spent some time away from the Eucharist because of the pandemic. No matter how long you are apart, Christ eagerly awaits your return.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 11:4b-15; Matthew 14:13-21 (407). *"He said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples."*

Tuesday, Aug 03, 2021

We're in the same boat

The "Barque (boat) of Saint Peter" is one of the oldest symbols of the Catholic Church. Early church fathers, like Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, compared the church to a sailing vessel. Saint Boniface wrote: "The church is like a great ship being pounded by the waves of life's different stresses. Our duty is not to abandon ship, but to keep her on her course." As Peter learned, the trick is to place our trust in Jesus. Pray for Pope Francis—successor to Peter—that he can guide the church through today's troubled waters.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 12:1-13; Matthew 14:22-36 or Matthew 15:1-2, 10-14 (408). *"Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus."*

Wednesday, Aug 04, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

Ministry for the ministers

The unique lives of Catholic priests and religious sometimes give rise to stressful times and difficult transitions that need the help of a healing hand. The Saint John Vianney Center in Downingtown, Pennsylvania serves Catholic clergy and religious struggling with behavioral and emotional issues, addictive and compulsive disorders, weight management, and other challenging issues that arise during their vocational journeys. The JVC employs modern therapeutic support along with traditional prayer, spiritual practices, and the intercession of today's saint to restore these

dedicated men and women to active and fruitful ministry. Pray for your religious sisters and brothers, priests, deacons, and bishops. They need your love.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 13:1-2, 25—14:1, 26-29a, 34-35; Matthew 15:21-28 (409). *"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."*

Thursday, Aug 05, 2021

MEMORIAL OF THE DEDICATION OF THE BASILICA OF MARY MAJOR

Legend-worthy Madonna

Legend has it that a freak snowstorm in August was a sign that urged a Christian couple to build an enormous Roman church dedicated to the Virgin: the Basilica of Mary Major, founded in the 400s. Yet this story is like many others that church historians call "legends." Our legends are not to be disdained; they usually uphold truths as interesting as the facts. In this case, the larger truth is that Mary is a key member of the communion of saints who helps us on our path to God. During this month when Mary is particularly venerated, ask for her intercession.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 20:1-13; Matthew 16:13-23 (410). *"Then, raising his hand, Moses struck the rock twice with his staff, and water gushed out in abundance for the people and their livestock to drink."*

Friday, Aug 06, 2021

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Shhh . . .

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply," says leadership guru Stephen Covey. When we fail to listen, we miss the messages necessary for growth in ourselves and others. Listening builds a well of wisdom that helps the listener and the speaker get to know themselves better. "Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality," says Henri Nouwen, and Pope Francis calls listening a form of "self-sacrifice" as we put another person above ourselves and "share questions and doubts." God commanded Jesus' disciples to listen to him. We are called to do the same.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Mark 9:2-10 (614). *"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."*

Saturday, Aug 07, 2021

MEMORIAL OF SIXTUS II, POPE, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

The courage to teach

Today's teachers have a tough job (which the pandemic only made more difficult). But imagine risking your life to teach about your faith. That's how it was "back in the day." In the year 258, Roman soldiers burst into the room where Sixtus was teaching, dragged him from the chair, and beheaded him in the street. Six deacons joined him in martyrdom that day. Many bishops, priests, and deacons were murdered during that persecution by the Roman Emperor Valerian. Next time you're in the pew, find Sixtus in Eucharistic Prayer I, the first one printed in your missalette. He's in the list that includes "Linus, Cletus, Clement," and other notables of the early church. When you get to the name Sixtus II, pause and remember his courageous sacrifice to pass on the faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 6:4-13; Matthew 17:14-20 (412). *"[I]f you have faith the size of a mustard seed . . . Nothing will be impossible for you."*

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



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