

Sunday, Jul 25, 2021

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Celebrate mom-and-pop operations

However few dollars there are, parents make them stretch until payday. However uncertain the way ahead, they shoulder the decision-making for their brood. However dark the night and scary the storm, parents hug their little ones through it. Today our nation celebrates Parents' Day, honoring the grownups who make children's lives safer, happier, and healthier. While they may not multiply loaves and fishes quite like Jesus, parents do perform minor miracles of sufficiency every day across this country. They take imperfect human love and weave a blanket of protection and possibility for their tribe. Support your local parents!

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Kings 4:42-44; Ephesians 4:1-6; John 6:1-15 (110). *"Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted."*

Monday, Jul 26, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Family ties

Jesus' ancestry through Joseph is extensively traced in two of the gospels, but there's nothing there about his maternal line. The names of his grandparents—Mary's parents—aren't mentioned in scripture, but tradition has dubbed them Joachim and Anne. Whatever their names were, they had to have been remarkable people to have raised the mother of God. The courage and faith they passed on to Mary is a precious gift all parents can pass to their children. Treasure your own intergenerational bonds.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:15-24, 30-34; Matthew 13:31-35 (401). *"The birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches."*

Tuesday, Jul 27, 2021

Parables of trying and trust

Jesus favored parables—short allegories featuring people, places, and things familiar to ordinary listeners—to get his point across. Typically, they were about the kingdom of God, standing in stark contrast to the current world. "The kingdom of God, even if it requires our cooperation, is firstly a gift of the Lord," Pope Benedict XVI reminded pilgrims in 2012. Not that humans shouldn't lift a finger. Such parables, Benedict said, echo a famous saying from Ignatius of Loyola: "Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God." Where do you need to trust God more and where, perhaps, do you need to act?

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 33:7-11; 34:5b-9, 28; Matthew 13:36-43 (402). *"Whoever has ears ought to hear."*

Wednesday, Jul 28, 2021

Stay the course

Father Stanley Rother is one step away from canonization and being named publicly as a saint of the Catholic Church. Born in Oklahoma in 1935, ordained a priest in 1963, missioned to Guatemala in 1968, Rother immersed himself among the Tz'ujil Mayan communities. When civil war broke out and his name appeared on a death list, after briefly departing he decided to return, saying, the "shepherd cannot run." On July 28, 1981, three men entered the rectory where he lived and killed him. Now recognized as a martyr for the faith, Rother was beatified by the

Vatican in 2016. As we await the canonization of this first American martyr, pray that you, too, might be a sign of Christ's love to the people close to you, even when it comes at a cost.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 34:29-35; Matthew 13:44-46 (403).

"When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it."

Thursday, Jul 29, 2021

MEMORIAL OF MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS

Lesson learned

Any memorial honoring Saint Martha, along with her sister and brother, includes a well-deserved nod to those who quietly serve. But Martha's role in salvation history goes well beyond her hospitality to Jesus and lies in the example of her maturing faith. When Jesus admonished her about her anxiety, Martha listened. She grew in wisdom and understanding, so much so that when her brother Lazarus dies, she runs to meet Jesus and declares: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Martha provides an inspiration to all of us to persevere in knowing God, loving Christ, and serving others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 40:16-21, 34-38 (404); John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42 (607). *"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing."*

Friday, Jul 30, 2021

Open the door to your own ministry

Do you ever think about your daily activities as a ministry? No activity is outside the realm of a possible ministry. Take Blessed Solanus Casey, for example. One of Solanus' jobs was as a porter, that is, a door keeper. Open/shut case, right? Not at all! Solanus understood his simple job as being a true ministry, service of God through service of others. He did not merely answer the door; he opened his heart to everyone who entered. In doing so, Solanus was able to reflect God's love and healing to others in a way that truly made a difference. How do you open your heart to others during your daily routine?

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37; Matthew 13:54-58 (405). *"Is he not the carpenter's son?"*

Saturday, Jul 31, 2021

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

Book your biblical excursion

Never underestimate the power of a book to change lives or history. Ignatius of Loyola was a young Spanish soldier from a prominent military family. While recovering from a serious war injury, he came upon *Vita Christi*, a spiritual biography of the life of Christ by 14th-century German Catholic monk Ludolph of Saxony. In the book he found the meditative technique of immersing oneself in a biblical scene from the life of Jesus. The book changed Ignatius' life, and the technique became foundational to the development of Ignatian spirituality and the famed *Spiritual Exercises*. Try the technique: Open a gospel, read a story, and place yourself at the scene. Really be there. See what happens.

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 25:1, 8-17; Matthew 14:1-12 (406).

"This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you."

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



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