

Sunday, Jun 26, 2022

Respect your freedom

The Statue of Liberty is the symbol of our nation's reverence for personal freedom. Yet too many of us lose our liberty to substance abuse and other addictive behaviors, including gambling, pornography, overeating, and compulsive consumerism. More subtle than these overt practices are patterns of thinking and feeling we may be losing control over: anxiety, depression, rage, racism. Today is the World Day Against Drug Abuse and Trafficking. Prayerfully reflect on behaviors or emotional states that make you feel less free, and take a step today toward liberty.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21; Galatians 5:1, 13-18; Luke 9:51-62 (99). *"For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery."*

Monday, Jun 27, 2022

Everyone needs a mother's love

Saint Cyril of Alexandria died on this day in 444. He is remembered for many things—admittedly not all of them good—as the archbishop of his city, which was at the height of its influence over the Mediterranean world during his time. One of his most enduring legacies was his hard-fought teaching on Mary as the "Mother of God," which created the basis for all other theology about Mary. Saints aren't perfect, and neither was Cyril—the man who helped connect us to a tender, loving mother in Mary also committed acts of violence and injustice. Perhaps his deep flaws illustrate just how much all of us—even saints who champion Mary—need her intercession.

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 2:6-10, 13-16; Matthew 8:18-22 (377). *"Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."*

Tuesday, Jun 28, 2022

Come alive with faith

For Irenaeus, the Incarnation says as much about the redeemed as it does our Redeemer. Yes, Christian doctrine teaches that Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine. And, yes, Irenaeus battled the heresy known as Gnosticism—which emphasized the divine nature of Jesus at the expense of his humanity. But for Irenaeus, the Incarnation also meant that the "glory of God is a human being fully alive." He believed that God became human so that humans might become divine. How will you choose to be "fully alive" today, in order to glorify God?

MEMORIAL OF IRENAEUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12; Matthew 8:23-27 (378). *"The men were amazed and said, 'What sort of man is this?'"*

Wednesday, Jun 29, 2022

Rest in peace

You might think that the two foundational giants of the Christian tradition who share a feast day would have been best buddies, but in fact Peter and Paul had their differences, especially around the question of whether people who weren't Jews needed to observe Jewish Law in order to become followers of Jesus. It is not entirely clear whether they fully reconciled their differences before they were both martyred in Rome (on the same day, tradition says), though it is clear that Paul's position carried the day over time. Perhaps there's a message for today's divided church—we can disagree with one another, even on matters of great importance,

and still rest together in the same great tradition.

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES

TODAY'S READINGS: Day: Acts 12:1-11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19 (591). *"Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

Thursday, Jun 30, 2022

Keep their memory alive

It is a deeply human act to remember the dead, especially those who died as result of acts of violence. Today's memorial for the First Martyrs of the Church in Rome places the church squarely within this tradition of remembrance. We recall innumerable Christians who were put to death in gruesome ways by the emperor Nero, who blamed Christians for a devastating fire in Rome in the year 64. Nero did not crush the church, and neither has the memory of those early martyrs been erased. Your reading these words keeps alive their memory and their sacrifice.

MEMORIAL OF THE FIRST MARTYRS OF THE CHURCH IN ROME

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 7:10-17; Matthew 9:1-8 (380). *"He then said to the paralytic, 'Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.'"*

Friday, Jul 01, 2022

Mixed legacies

On April 1, 2022, Pope Francis offered an historic apology to Inuit, Métis, and First Nations delegations for the church's role in harming Canadian Indigenous Peoples in Catholic residential schools. This is no small thing to do—for the church or for us individually. It is difficult to admit that we, and members of the church we call our own, have at times harmed others. Yet it is essential to begin the journey of healing. With Pope Francis, let us commit to an honest reevaluation of the church's colonial-era missionary efforts, such as those of Junípero Serra in what is now California. Let us also be aware of our own shortcomings, seeking forgiveness with humility and making meaningful amends wherever possible.

MEMORIAL OF JUNÍPERO SERRA, FRANCISCAN PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 8:4-6, 9-12; Matthew 9:9-13 (381). *"Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land!"*

Saturday, Jul 02, 2022

Woe is me

The Pharisees get a bad rap in the gospels, typically portrayed as Jesus' antagonists, narrow-minded and legalistic, focused on outward ritual rather than inner renewal. And surely there are elements that ring true. At the same time, some of their beliefs were quite compatible with Christianity as it evolved, including the belief in life after death, the resurrection of the body, keeping the Sabbath holy (i.e., Sunday Mass obligation), and the priority to spread the faith. It's easy to see the blind spots and shortcomings of others. Harder to see our own. Are you aware of your own inner Pharisee?

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 9:11-15; Matthew 9:14-17 (382). *"Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but your disciples do not fast?"*

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



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