

Sunday, Mar 12, 2023

Truth be told

Pontius Pilate famously asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Pilate didn't stick around for the answer (which in itself says a lot), but if he had, he might have heard something like the definition the Catechism of the Catholic Church provides: "Truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity, or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy." Now we have a sense of what it means to imitate Christ in all things.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42 (28). "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."

Monday, Mar 13, 2023

On the frontiers of servanthood

When you think of the legendary figures of the Wild West, Billy the Kid, Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Geronimo, and Sitting Bull come to mind. But how about Sister Blandina Segale? Add her to list—because she had encounters with many of those men and women, and her life was also the stuff of lore. Born in 1850, this Italian-American Sister of Charity of Cincinnati traveled alone through the American frontier to serve the poor and sick (including saving the life of a seriously wounded Billy the Kid), to advocate for Native American civil rights, and to fight against lynching (including protecting a contrite murderer from a mob). This Catholic Sisters Week (March 8-14) count Segale, honored by the church with the title servant of God, among the heroic sisters who have your gratitude for spreading the faith.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Kings 5:1-15b; Luke 4:24-30 (237). "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."

Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023

No room for hate

Fannie Lou Hamer died this day in 1977. But she nearly died in 1963, in a Mississippi jail cell—so badly beaten, as a civil rights advocate, that her cell mate didn't think she'd survive the night. But Hamer asked her to join in singing the hymn "Walk With Me, Lord" and lived to see another day. In fact Hamer lived to testify, on television, before the 1964 Democratic National Convention. A tireless campaigner for women's voting rights, she was also inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Follow Hamer's lead in fostering forgiveness: "I feel sorry for anybody that could let hate wrap them up. Ain't no such thing as I can hate anybody and hope to see God's face."

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 3:25, 34-43; Matthew 18:21-35 (238). "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?"

Wednesday, Mar 15, 2023

Printing the truth is worth the struggle

On this week in 1827, *Freedom's Journal* began publication as the first African-American newspaper in history. Founded by Protestant minister John Wilk and leading free black men in New York City, the paper would set off a revolution in U.S. media, resulting in similar papers being established nationwide, forming the black press. Daniel Rudd founded the first black Catholic

newspaper in 1885, and the explosion in African-American conversions to Catholicism in the 20th century can be attributed in large part to these newspapers advertising better conditions in the northern United States (where Catholic parishes and schools happened to be plentiful). The black press continues today in many American cities and represents one of the nation's original justice-focused professional institutions. Consider supporting a local—or national—black news outlet today.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Matthew 5:17-19 (239). "Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life; you have the words of everlasting life."

Thursday, Mar 16, 2023

Let God carry it

The comedy-drama *The Banshees of Inisherin* features a man gloomy about his eventual death going to Confession over a period of weeks. Each time, the priest asks, "And how is the despair?" implying despair itself might be seen as a sin—rather tough but also tender in the way the priest wants to understand the whole man. The church upholds hope as a virtue and warns against despair because it can leave no room for God's grace. That said, our faith leaders have long shown compassion for the complexities of depression in its many forms. Whatever your emotional state, consider turning today's burdens over to God.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 7:23-28; Luke 11:14-23 (240). "But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you."

Friday, Mar 17, 2023

As luck would have it

The Lord expects great things from us: namely, to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Are humans really capable of such love? Irish writer Oscar Wilde had his doubts: "I sometimes think that God in creating man somewhat overestimated his ability." We human beings do tend to make a mess of things when left to our own devices, but luckily for us, we have a loving God who sent Jesus to show us the way to love, and the Holy Spirit to keep us on the path of love. In honor of Saint Patrick, remember to draw on the Trinity as you continually recalibrate your trajectory toward love.

MEMORIAL OF PATRICK, BISHOP

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 14:2-10; Mark 12:28-34 (241). "Straight are the paths of the LORD, in them the just walk."

Saturday, Mar 18, 2023

The fragrance of forgiveness

Cyril, a fourth-century bishop of Jerusalem and a doctor of the church, was instrumental in forming the church's doctrinal understanding of the Holy Spirit. He wrote, "The Spirit comes gently and makes himself known by his fragrance. He is not felt as a burden for God is light . . . The Spirit comes with the tenderness of a true friend to save, to heal, to teach, to counsel, to strengthen and to console." The formula for absolution in the sacrament of Reconciliation identifies the Holy Spirit as sent "for the forgiveness of sins." Celebrate the sacrament at your church this afternoon.

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

TODAY'S READINGS: Hosea 6:1-6; Luke 18:9-14 (242). "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

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



©2023 TrueQuest Communications. TakeFiveForFaith.com; mail@takefiveforfaith.com. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. For more information about TAKE FIVE and our regular contributors, go to PrepareTheWord.com. **Free daily email and app available online at TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe.**