



## Sunday, Oct 04, 2020

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Celebrate the joy of new life

In a happy collision of observances, October is dedicated to respecting life, supporting fair trade, employing the differently abled, and praying the Rosary. Today is not only Respect Life Sunday but also, in memory of Francis of Assisi, an occasion to bless the animals who share our lives. If you're seeking an integrated moral code, here's your chance to champion the spectrum of life. The Rosary's Joyful Mysteries lead the way: embrace new life, encourage mothers, support child-affirming laws, recognize the gifts of all God's children, and respect the wisdom of young people.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 5:1-7; Philipians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43

(139). "Finally, [the landowner] sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.'"

## Monday, Oct 05, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BLESSED FRANCIS XAVIER SEELOS, PRIEST

### A saint for this season

As we've lately learned, it's hard to be happy during a health crisis, but Redemptorist Father Francis Xavier Seelos was called the "Cheerful Ascetic," even while serving the sick during a disease outbreak. Known for his kindness and missionary zeal, this German-born priest kept his sermons simple for everyone to understand and was sought out as a compassionate confessor. He was an itinerant preacher throughout the Eastern and Midwestern United States, before being sent to New Orleans where he died of yellow fever. Those seeking healing can submit their prayer petition to the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 1:6-12; Luke 10:25-37 (461).

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart . . . and your neighbor as yourself."

## Tuesday, Oct 06, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BLESSED MARIE ROSE DUROCHER, VIRGIN

### When Mary receives a Martha job

Jesus said his friend Mary was right to cease activity, to simply sit at his feet and listen. But the church may ask you to be more like Martha—to reach out to the world, as Jesus also called on his followers to do. Such was the dilemma of Marie Rose Durocher. This quiet and frail young woman preferred the quiet life but was pressed into pastoral service by her brother, a Montreal priest in the 1830s. Then her bishop asked her to start a new religious community to help educate the young. How is God asking you to move beyond your own comfort zone today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 1:13-24; Luke 10:38-42 (462). "A woman whose name was Martha welcomed him."

## Wednesday, Oct 07, 2020

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

### Protect us from harm

The Rosary has been a favored Catholic form of prayer for centuries. Inviting us to pray five Our Fathers, 50 Hail Marys, and five Glory Be's while meditating on gospel stories from Mary's and Jesus' lives, this spiritual practice has helped generations of Catholics ask for Mary's intercession. In October 1571, Catholic soldiers prayed the Rosary to prepare for battle with Turkish

soldiers in the Gulf of Corinth. When they won that battle, Pope Pius V claimed that October 7 would be known as the Feast of Our Lady of Victory. Two years later, his successor, Gregory XIII, changed the name to the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. As our world faces the challenge of the COVID-19 virus, we again ask for Mary's intercession. Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14; Luke 11:1-4 (463).

"Jesus was praying in a certain place."

## Thursday, Oct 08, 2020

### Persistence pays off

Prayer is not like an ATM whereby requests are entered and dispensed. Ultimately our model is Jesus. Christ's persistence in prayer united him with God but did not erase his suffering. He sweated blood, he was crucified. When we do not receive the answer we are hoping for to our prayer request, we may suffer too, but, like Jesus, we can open ourselves to deeper union with God. Take time today to offer God your needs, trusting that God's strength and presence always suffices.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 3:1-5; Luke 11:5-13 (464). "If you . . .

give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

## Friday, Oct 09, 2020

### God casts out evil

Although Hollywood has popularized exorcism with such movies as *The Exorcist* (1973) and more recently *The Conjuring* series, exorcism is a legitimate rite in the church. An exorcism is actually a form of prayer. It is used in situations where the faithful experience a force of evil or the "powers of darkness," which we call the devil or demons. Recognizing the place of exorcism in the prayers of the church is important because it reminds us that God has already freed us from the snare of evil. As you encounter various "demons" in your life, remember to pray: Call upon God to be with you and to separate you from all that is evil and to surround you with God's love.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 3:7-14; Luke 11:15-26 (465). "But if it is by the finger of God that [I] drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

## Saturday, Oct 10, 2020

### Put on your dancing shoes!

On this day, the Jewish community celebrates Simchat Torah. This joyous harvest festival marks the beginning and end of the annual Torah reading, and culminates in dancing with the sacred texts. In a similar sense of celebration, Jesus says to his disciples, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it." Choose scripture as your companion, and get ready to shimmy, shake, rock and roll, and trip the light fantastic all for the greater glory of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 3:22-29; Luke 11:27-28 (466). "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."

## Sunday, Oct 11, 2020

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Seek wisdom's light

If we learned nothing else this year, it's that circumstances change. Societies come together and shatter apart. Wellness comes and goes. Markets rise and fall. War and peace exchange places. We climb up and down the ladder of success. If we're wise, we learn what Saint Paul observed: Spiritual flexibility beats insisting and resisting. Today the Rosary's Luminous Mysteries guide us to wisdom: Partner with the Holy Spirit, trust grace to supply what's needed, seek the Kingdom's paradox, recognize Jesus in the faces of the poor, and know that God is present at every table.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22:1-14 (142). *"I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance."*

## Monday, Oct 12, 2020

### The past calls us to a more just future

Indigenous Peoples' Day is celebrated in many communities to honor Native Americans and their histories and cultures. Today is also a U.S. federal holiday, Columbus Day. Many want the former to replace the latter, while others are dismayed by the growing trend. We can acknowledge the complicity of colonial church leaders in the exploitation and abuse of native peoples (though there were notable exceptions like Bartolomé de las Casas). At the same time, we can work to right those wrongs in the present and forge a more just future together, building the reign of God here and now.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 4:22-24, 26-27, 31—5:1; Luke 11:29-32 (467). *"Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation."*

## Tuesday, Oct 13, 2020

### Ponder the mystery

For centuries the Catholic Church has honored Mary in both May and October. So perhaps it wasn't surprising that Our Lady of Fatima reportedly began to appear once a month to three children in Portugal in 1917—beginning on May 13 and ending on this day, October 13. On the last day, with more than 70,000 people gathered in anticipation, many reported seeing an unusual heavenly phenomenon that has been called the "dance of the sun." Ponder today what Pope John Paul II identified as Fatima's significance: "conversion and repentance, the nucleus of the message of the gospel."

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 5:1-6; Luke 11:37-41 (468). *"Through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness."*

## Wednesday, Oct 14, 2020

MEMORIAL OF CALLISTUS I, POPE, MARTYR

### Differences of opinion are nothing new

Callistus I was elected pope by the clergy and laity of Rome in 217. The election results did not sit well with that election's runner-up, Hippolytus. The two men disagreed on church doctrine and Hippolytus accused Callistus of leniency in enforcing church rules. Callistus' tolerance imitated Jesus' compassion but Hippolytus did not see it that way. He became the first anti-pope in church history, a schism that lasted 18 years. Eventually, Hippolytus reconciled with the church but not before Callistus I was martyred in a local Roman disturbance in 222. This piece of history is a reminder that differences will

occur among church leaders, but the promised Holy Spirit remains with us. Pray for peaceful resolution of differences, in church and in society.

TODAY'S READINGS: Galatians 5:18-25; Luke 11:42-46 (469). *"If you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law."*

## Thursday, Oct 15, 2020

MEMORIAL OF TERESA OF JESUS, VIRGIN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Seek some mystic reform

Today we honor one of the great women of the church, Saint Teresa of Ávila, also known as Teresa of Jesus. Teresa's life seemed rather routine on the surface—she was a cloistered nun in the 1500s. But as her mystical encounters with Jesus emerged, along with her desire for a simpler, less "worldly" way of being, she began to write about the spiritual life and advocated for reform of her religious order, against strong opposition. Declared a doctor of the church in 1970, Teresa's reforms and enduring spiritual insights still carry weight. What reform, small or large, can you work toward today that can help bring about peace and spiritual growth for yourself and others?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 1:1-10; Luke 11:47-54 (470). *"Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge."*

## Friday, Oct 16, 2020

MEMORIAL OF MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, VIRGIN

### Put your heart into it

From stained glass windows to tattoos, the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been an enduring, powerful symbol to many people from all walks of life. In the 17th century, particular attention to the heart of Jesus began to be promoted. Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French Visitation nun, had a special tenderness for Jesus' Sacred Heart and often shared her prayers and visions of it. In the heart of Jesus—imaged as pierced with thorns, flames, and a cross atop—she experienced the burning love of Christ for all people and the trust that Jesus held all of our joys and suffering in his heart. With Margaret Mary, what joys and sufferings might we entrust to the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 1:11-14; Luke 12:1-7 (471). *"In Christ we were . . . chosen."*

## Saturday, Oct 17, 2020

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, BISHOP, MARTYR

### Journey with courage

Map the distance between Antioch, Syria, and Rome: 3,716 kilometers, 39 hours by car—without traffic. Now imagine traveling that distance in chains around the year 107, with hungry lions awaiting your arrival. Even with all that, Ignatius of Antioch, approaching a brutal martyrdom, writes from the road to the Ephesians: "I do not issue orders to you, as if I were some great person. For though I am bound for His name, I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ." His focus is on the privilege of dying for God's glory: "Being blessed in the greatness and fullness of God," he sends readers "abundant happiness through Jesus Christ, and His undefiled joy." Call on Ignatius when you face the really frightful realities life confronts us with at times. TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 12:8-12 (472). *"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints."*

## Sunday, Oct 18, 2020

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Share the suffering, ease the burden

People in love behave differently. They “never stand still,” Pope Francis declares. “They’re drawn out of themselves; they’re attracted and attract others in turn.” Believers are lovers in this way, feeling the irresistible urge to share the blessings of faith. That is why, the pope concludes, we must all be missionaries. On this World Mission Sunday, we embrace the call to be lovers of our suffering world. The Rosary’s Sorrowful Mysteries hold the keys: Bring global suffering to prayer, be willing to suffer for the truth, bear wrongs patiently, share the burdens of others, and know what’s worth sacrificing for.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b; Matthew 22:15-21 (145). *“For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and the Spirit and with much conviction.”*

## Monday, Oct 19, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DE BRÉBEUF AND ISAAC JOGUES, PRIESTS, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

### Heal the breach

Jean de Brébeuf was a French Jesuit missionary who worked with the Huron in what is today Canada and was martyred in an Iroquois raid. Brébeuf was a skilled linguist and not only learned the Huron language but also the spiritual beliefs already held by the Huron. His fellow Jesuits wrote about how easily Brébeuf adapted himself to the Huron way of life. While he was not always respectful of Huron culture, we can emulate his effort to create bridges of mutual understanding, as our own country is today torn by differences.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 2:1-10; Luke 12:13-21 (473). *“You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?”*

## Tuesday, Oct 20, 2020

MEMORIAL OF PAUL OF THE CROSS, PRIEST

### How deep is your love?

Paul of the Cross, Italian mystic and founder of the Passionist religious order in 1725, was taught by his mother to look to the crucified Jesus as a way to make sense out of suffering. Most of his siblings died; his father’s business barely scraped by. But no matter what hardships the family endured, his mother said, they were nothing compared to God’s deep love. What a seed she planted in her son! “The holy sufferings of Jesus is a sea of sorrows, but it is also a sea of love,” wrote Paul. “Ask the Lord to teach you to fish in this sea.”

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 2:12-22; Luke 12:35-38 (474). *“Be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open.”*

## Wednesday, Oct 21, 2020

### People, get ready

“Be Prepared” is a motto for the Boy and Girl Scouts that is explained in this way: “You are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your duty.” That motto could very well be a motto for Christian life. Jesus expects his followers to be alert to

the assistance of the Spirit and to act in ways that bear witness to Christian duty. It is a Christian’s duty to use the gifts of time and talent to build up Jesus’ kingdom of love. When you review the past week, can you find evidence that you are doing your Christian duty by responding to Jesus’ call to love unconditionally?

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 3:2-12; Luke 12:39-48 (475). *“You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”*

## Thursday, Oct 22, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JOHN PAUL II, POPE

### Small acts can have great impact

Saint John Paul II’s quarter-century as pope greatly influenced both church and state. Many times his personal witness is what moved people’s hearts. Christians and those of other faiths alike were moved by his willingness to meet with his would-be assassin, Mehmet Ali Ağca. While most people’s lives are not lived on the world stage, each of us can bear witness through acts of love, forgiveness, and reverence. What gesture of yours today can bear witness to God?

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 3:14-21; Luke 12:49-53 (476). *“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!”*

## Friday, Oct 23, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF CAPISTRANO, PRIEST

### Fly back when the time is right

The cliff swallows of San Juan Capistrano, California depart the mission town on or around this date, the Memorial of Saint John, the town’s namesake. They return every spring after their 6,000-mile winter migration to Argentina. Pray that, like the swallows of Capistrano, everyone will be able to safely come back to the place they call home, after war, famine, natural disaster, or separation due to pandemic.

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 4:1-6; Luke 12:54-59 (477). *“Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.”*

## Saturday, Oct 24, 2020

MEMORIAL OF ANTHONY MARY CLARET, BISHOP

### Let your light shine!

As a young man, Anthony Claret was torn between his talent in the textile business and the emerging call he felt to religious life. Seeing his talent, his father offered to share leadership of the family business with him. Anthony was famously short of stature, and he pointed out that workers likely would resist taking orders from him. His father suggested they could hide Anthony behind a desk to come up with ideas and put a larger man in charge of the workers. That sealed the deal for Anthony—he wasn’t interested in hiding. Thereafter he was a tireless and talented preacher, confessor, author, and publisher in the service of God. Don’t hide your own gifts—they are God-given and the world needs them!

TODAY’S READINGS: Ephesians 4:7-16; Luke 13:1-9 (478). *“It may bear fruit in the future.”*

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



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## Sunday, Oct 25, 2020

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Worship the God of glory

Leadership earns public honors, and the best leaders exercise humility in accepting them. Pope Francis began his papacy by donning simple attire and asking for our prayers before offering his first blessing. Genuine leadership recognizes that all authority comes from God. Today is Priesthood Sunday, honoring the multitudes of pastors who did their job this year with passion, grace, and ingenuity under extraordinary circumstances. Pray the Rosary's Glorious Mysteries for those who lead us to: rise up from despair, lift our gaze upward, encounter the Spirit's power, give ourselves body and soul, and accept honor with grace.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 22:20-26; 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10; Matthew 22:34-40 (148). "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

## Monday, Oct 26, 2020

### Slow down, you're moving too fast

Too many people work too much. Some have a psychological compulsion to work incessantly. Some work excessively to acquire money and success. Some have no identity outside of their jobs. Some are driven by guilt and fear of being lazy. Some think that an overly busy work life makes them look important. And far too many are forced to work too much in order to make ends meet. None of these reasons are healthy or holy. God wants us to rest and enjoy life too—thus, the sabbath day. Let's work together to create a just society where all can get some rest.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 4:32—5:8; Luke 13:10-17 (479). "Ought she not to have been set free on the sabbath day from this bondage?"

## Tuesday, Oct 27, 2020

### Console the consolers

Prayerful words from the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, written by NACC member Lisa Ecks: "May the wilderness of this time, and the uncertainty we may feel, strengthen our resolve to lean on your word, abide in your presence, and be guided by your enduring and powerful Spirit." The NACC helps priests, religious women, and laypeople bring a trained, professional experience to their ministry of caring for the sick. Pray for all hospital chaplains during this Pastoral Care Week. They're consoling not just COVID-19 patients but medical workers on the front lines.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 5:21-33; Luke 13:18-21 (480). "Jesus said, 'What is the kingdom of God like? To what can I compare it?'"

## Wednesday, Oct 28, 2020

FEAST OF SIMON AND JUDE, APOSTLES

### Obscure but still important

Much of what we know about apostles Jude and Simon is who they are *not*. Simon was called the Zealot—someone passionate, and perhaps revolutionary, about his Jewish faith. Calling him the Zealot also helped to distinguish him from the more famous Simon Peter. We find Jude (along with Judas, variant translations of the name Judah) mentioned in the list of the apostles in Luke and Acts, but he is called Thaddeus in Matthew and Mark, perhaps to distinguish him from the traitor Judas Iscariot.

Regardless of their relative obscurity, Jude and Simon were chosen by Jesus to share the Good News and there is every indication they did just that. Even if your life seems quiet and unremarkable to you in some ways, the call to discipleship is your call as well. Saint Jude and Saint Simon, pray for us.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 2:19-22; Luke 6:12-16 (666). "Jesus called the disciples to himself. . . . Simon who was called the Zealot and Judas the son of James."

## Thursday, Oct 29, 2020

### Do the right thing

Even in this day and age, Christians standing up for what is right have been killed for their efforts. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. comes to mind. So does Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, of Dayton, Ohio, who was murdered in 2005 for defending the poor and protected lands in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil. Would you allow yourself to be inconvenienced (or more) to do the right thing? Look for a way to stand up for a good cause today, even if it feels inconvenient.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 6:10-20; Luke 13:31-35 (482). "Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . . how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings."

## Friday, Oct 30, 2020

### A time for healing

One of the comforting takeaways from our experience of church during the pandemic is that people are more important than rules. The obligation to physically participate in Sunday Mass has been dispensed during the pandemic by our bishops. We are given the opportunity to make a "spiritual communion" instead. We don't have to go to Confession to be absolved of our sins. A sincere Act of Contrition and a resolve to celebrate the sacrament when it once again becomes available is sufficient. Just as Jesus set aside the sabbath commandment in order to heal, so too our bishops set aside the precepts so that we may be healed. Let's pray today for our bishops, and for a time of healing.

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 1:1-11; Luke 14:1-6 (483). "The one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it."

## Saturday, Oct 31, 2020

### Meal ministry

One of the many things to be longed for during this extended time of physical distancing is the free and easy sharing of meals with family and friends, in groups large and small. Shared meals hold a special place in family life, and in Catholic life as well. It's no mystery why meals are central. Something magical happens at mealtime, the communion among people is palpable. And in Catholic life, Communion is sacred. Pray we may safely gather again without appointment or extra precautions in the not distant future and freely share the mysteries of our faith in the bread and wine, the Body and Blood. Until then, let us raise a glass in remembrance of Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Philippians 1:18b-26; Luke 14:1, 7-11 (484). "On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully."