

Sunday, Sep 29, 2019

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Try a little tenderness

We hear folks wish out loud for more patience. In church circles, many voice the ambition to be more devout, loving, or kind. Cultivating a spirit of gentleness, however, is rare on the wish list. Why the oversight? Gentleness makes it onto a lot of Saint Paul's checklists, including his nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. Paul was sensitive to this virtue, perhaps because he could be pretty rough on fellow Christians who disappointed him! What would happen if you spent one day choosing the softer look, the more careful word, the gentler touch? Try it and find out.

TODAY'S READINGS: Amos 6:1a, 4-7; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Luke 16:19-31 (138). *"Pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness."*

Monday, Sep 30, 2019

MEMORIAL OF JEROME, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Consider the source

When you make a photocopy of a photocopy, the original becomes harder to see, read, and understand. Saint Jerome, the great linguist, experienced this with the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. As the use of Latin spread with the Holy Roman Empire—edging out the Greek used by early Christians—the church began to rely on Latin translations of the Septuagint. Jerome thought we could do better. He went back to the original Hebrew, mining the texts as Jesus and other Jews knew them. Not everyone agreed with Jerome. Saint Augustine preferred the Greek. Arguments ensued; a compromise evolved. A strength of church teaching that benefits us today: Differences of opinion can birth a better outcome.

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 8:1-8; Luke 9:46-50 (455). *"An argument arose among the disciples."*

Tuesday, Oct 01, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS, VIRGIN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Sailing toward the eternal shore

How would you describe your life's journey? Thérèse of Lisieux—Carmelite nun, saint, and doctor of the church—imagined her life journey as sailing the sea. Reflecting one evening on the sun setting across the sea at Trouville, she wrote of how the sun left a "luminous trail." "It was to me the image of God's grace shedding its light across the path the little white-sailed vessel had to travel." She committed herself to following Jesus "in order to travel peacefully towards the eternal shore." What image would you use? And how do you experience God with you along the way?

TODAY'S READINGS: Zechariah 8:20-23; Luke 9:51-56 (456). *"I too will go to seek the Lord."*

Wednesday, Oct 02, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS

Stand by me

Today the church gives a shout-out to guardian angels. "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him [or her] to life," is how the Catholic catechism puts it. Whether you picture a comforting winged angel at your shoulder, or see your guardian angel as more of a metaphor for God's loving care, great comfort can be found by relaxing into this protection.

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 2:1-8 (457); Matthew 18:1-5, 10 (650). *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father."*

Thursday, Oct 03, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THEODORE GUERIN, RELIGIOUS (SAINT THEODORA)

Discipleship with backbone

"Sisters, let's pack our bags," Mother Guerin's community responded when a clueless bishop locked her up and tried to excommunicate her for challenging his need to control. Guerin inspired loyalty; the first sisters bonded after landing on the raw Indiana frontier, speaking only French. As if hunger, overturned stagecoaches, financial hardships, and terrible health weren't trials enough, the bishop believed he owned them. After epic battles, Guerin finally triumphed. A simple frame shed eventually became Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the country's oldest Catholic liberal arts college for women. Learn how Guerin's college empowers students at the website: smwc.edu.

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Luke 10:1-12 (458). *"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few."*

Friday, Oct 04, 2019

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI, RELIGIOUS

Faithful to the end

Saint Francis of Assisi gave us two kinds of crosses. One is the San Damiano Cross, depicting the Crucifixion and its witnesses. It replicates the cross Francis prayed to when God said, "Rebuild my church." The other is the simple T-shaped tau cross, made of wood—reminding us to be flexible and humble—which is the final letter of the old Hebrew alphabet (as omega is in Greek, when we say Christ is "Alpha and Omega"). Francis loved the tau and used it as his seal. The prophet Ezekiel said that those faithful to God at the end would be marked with a tau. Remember this Beatitude: Those who are last will be first with God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Baruch 1:15-22; Luke 10:13-16 (459). *"Will you be exalted to heaven?"*

Saturday, Oct 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF BLESSED FRANCIS XAVIER SEELOS, PRIEST

Good medicine

Born in Bavaria, Francis Xavier Seelos joined the Redemptorists to serve as a missionary to German immigrants in the United States. By all accounts he flourished in ministry—and did so with a kind and cheerful attitude. After being stationed in New Orleans, however, he contracted yellow fever caring for the ill and died at the age of 48 in 1867. Imagine the suffering that could have been avoided if the yellow fever vaccine had been available then. So it is disconcerting today to see the anti-vaccine movement grow so strong. The World Health Organization identifies this movement as one of the top 10 global health threats of 2019, all the more troubling given the overwhelming scientific consensus about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. God gave us intelligence so that we might use it to alleviate suffering in the world. Get the facts and talk to those who have been swayed by baseless claims.

TODAY'S READINGS: Baruch 4:5-12, 27-29; Luke 10:17-24 (460). *"Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."*

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



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