

Sunday, Apr 19, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER; DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Empty chairs, full hearts

On this day 25 years ago, 168 people died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The footprint of the building is now ringed by trees providing a living threshold for ground made sacred by grief. A surviving wall records the names of those who lived through the tragedy, while a Field of Empty Chairs recalls the adults and children who perished. Violence created the need for this memorial. But the chairs, which become vigil lights of memory through each night, attest that a light shines in every darkness. Be that light.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31 (43).
"They devoted themselves . . . to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers."

Monday, Apr 20, 2020

EASTER WEEKDAY

Give life the last word

Today is the 21st anniversary of the Columbine school shooting. How to cope with the sorrow and outrage of that incident and so many similar ones? We begin to rebuild our society when we allow the Spirit to flow through us and see the face of God in others. "Every human being . . . , however weak, is created 'in the image and likeness of God,'" Pope Benedict XIV said in Cameroon in 2009. "Every person must live! . . . Death will never have the last word!" Acknowledge the right of those around you to live, no matter their differences, their weakness or strengths, their failings or successes.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 4:23-31; John 3:1-8 (267). "You do not know where [the wind] comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Tuesday, Apr 21, 2020

MEMORIAL OF ANSELM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Our Redeemer, in the flesh

In 1098, Saint Anselm wrote the treatise "Why the God-Man?" to champion a core Christian tenet: the Incarnation—the belief that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. Incarnation is a big deal. Nearly every heresy tackled by the Early Church concerned errant beliefs about Jesus' true nature. No, we don't believe that Jesus was merely human (Arianism) or that he was all divine, only pretending to be human (Docetism). We believe that the second person of the Trinity took on human flesh to save us. Imagine that!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 4:32-37; John 3:7b-15 (268). "You must be born from above."

Wednesday, Apr 22, 2020

EASTER WEEKDAY

Give your sister some breathing space

"Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life. . . . This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her." Thus opens *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical "On Care for Our Common Home." Do we really want to live in

darkness? Shine a light on what each of us can do to clean up the planet. And plant a tree for good measure!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 5:17-26; John 3:16-21 (269). "The light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light."

Thursday, Apr 23, 2020

MEMORIAL OF GEORGE, MARTYR

Face the dragon

The legend of Saint George the dragon slayer is a famous one, but it's not as rooted in historical fact as is the manner of his martyrdom. Yes, George had the courage to face a monster—but the monster was the Roman emperor Diocletian, whose persecution of Christians in the early 300s martyred not only George but well-known saints Sebastian, Agnes, Lucy, and Philomena, among countless others. George, a soldier, remained joyous even when tortured for his belief. What negative influences threaten your own joyous practice of Christian faith today—and are you willing to face them, as George was?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 5:27-33; John 3:31-36 (270). "One who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of earthly things."

Friday, Apr 24, 2020

MEMORIAL OF FIDELIS OF SIGMARINGEN, PRIEST, MARTYR

Clothes make the saint

Holding a law degree from Germany, Fidelis of Sigmaringen (1577-1622) was known as the "poor man's lawyer" who sometimes would give his destitute clients the clothes off his back. But he tired of the adversarial nature of the law profession, so he joined the Capuchin Friars. Ordained a priest in 1612, Fidelis was sent to Switzerland to convert Calvinist reformers. In violent reaction to his successful efforts, Fidelis was set upon and murdered. He was canonized in 1746 by Pope Benedict XIV. *Fidelis* means "faithful" in Latin. Exercise your faith today by donating clothes to the poor in memory of Fidelis.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15 (271). "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world."

Saturday, Apr 25, 2020

FEAST OF MARK, EVANGELIST

Write the Good News with the ink of your life

Mark was an early follower of Jesus but not one of the 12 apostles. Most scholars think that he was the "John who is called Mark" referenced in Acts 12:12 who joined in mission work with Paul and Barnabas. Today's first reading mentions that he had a special sonlike relationship with Peter. Beyond that, little is known except that he used the gifts he had been given to write the shortest and earliest gospel a few decades after Jesus' death. His gospel became the inspiration for Matthew and Luke to write theirs. How will those who come after you take inspiration from your life and the way you shared the Good News?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Peter 5:5b-14; Mark 16:15-20 (555). "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation."

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



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