

Sunday, Sep 20, 2020

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Grow your faith

Who gave you your first God lessons? On this Catechetical Sunday, we thank family members, preachers, teachers, RCIA teams, and others who brought the Good News to us. We're also grateful for holy ones, like Venerable Mother Theresa Dudzik, who taught by their example. A remarkable seamstress, Dudzik arrived in Chicago at age 21 after the Great Fire of 1871. She took the destitute into her apartment and sewed to earn money to feed them. In time she founded the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago to run homes, schools, day-care centers, and an orphanage. What will your own example teach others?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a (133). *"Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near."*

Monday, Sep 21, 2020

FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Rise up

Nobody likes paying taxes or has warm, fuzzy feelings about the IRS, but it seems tax collectors in Jesus' time had it especially rough—being lumped in with all manner of sinners. That is because tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Romans, the enemy occupiers of Jewish lands, so they were viewed as traitors by their people. Jesus sought them out for salvation anyway and led Matthew to a new position: apostle and evangelist. What does it take to get a promotion like that? Merely "get up and follow Jesus," as Matthew did.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643). *"I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."*

Tuesday, Sep 22, 2020

Trade stressed for blessed

Back-to-school September is such a stressful time for families. Add the reality of COVID-19—with parents trying to work from home, kids' schedules often up in the air—and it gets all the messier. Even if you don't have children at home, you probably know people who do and are stressing. How can we all find balance? Honor the sabbath in whatever way you are able, by hitting the pause button—even for a few hours. "Human life has a rhythm of work and rest," says the Catechism of the Catholic Church. "The institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives." Plan ahead for this coming Sunday.

TODAY'S READINGS: Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13; Luke 8:19-21 (450). *"To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD."*

Wednesday, Sep 23, 2020

MEMORIAL OF PIUS OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST

Listen from the heart

Saint Pius of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) is better known by his nickname, Padre Pio. He is said to have borne the stigmata, the wounds of our Lord, for more than 50 years. To be sure, he was a man of prayer and suffering, a Capuchin Franciscan priest who lived in a small Italian friary nearly all of his life. However, the principal reason for his local fame was his ability to listen to those who came seeking his counsel, to "read their hearts" and to offer them the love of God in the sacraments. His frequent message to

penitents, "Pray, hope, and don't worry," is a message for us to treasure and savor today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Proverbs 30:5-9; Luke 9:1-6 (451). *"He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God."*

Thursday, Sep 24, 2020

Find the balance between law and freedom

Today's gospel notes King Herod's interest in Jesus, whom Herod likely saw as a threat. The tension between political power and the moral and religious power of Christianity has been part of the faith since its beginning. In *Dignitatis Humane*, the Vatican II document on religious liberty, the Council "urges everyone, especially those who are charged with the task of educating others, to do their utmost to form people who, on the one hand, will respect the moral order and be obedient to lawful authority, and on the other hand, will be lovers of true freedom." Sounds like a recipe for peace and progress.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ecclesiastes 1:2-11; Luke 9:7-9 (452). *"But Herod said, 'John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?'"*

Friday, Sep 25, 2020

Keep the faith!

The coronavirus has taken quite a toll on Catholic parish and sacramental life. Nearly every bishop responding to a recent survey said the pandemic has seriously affected the celebration of the sacraments and rites and sacramental preparation programs in their dioceses. In addition, they report that the morale of priests, lay ecclesial ministers, deacons, and chancery staff has been damaged by the long shutdown, according to a survey out of Georgetown University. People are hurting at all levels of church life because the very thing we thrive on—gathering together—has become problematic and potentially life-threatening. Be patient and work with your local faith community to find safe and creative pastoral responses. And keep faith alive in your own home and heart!

TODAY'S READINGS: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Luke 9:18-22 (453). *"There is . . . a time for everything under the heavens . . . a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces."*

Saturday, Sep 26, 2020

MEMORIAL OF COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MARTYRS

Saints for this season

Today's brother physicians are patron saints to a long list of healthcare workers, and also against plagues. A brief year ago, biblical references to plagues and epidemics seemed quaint and far removed. Our eyes have been opened to the enduring force of such outbreaks, however, and Cosmas and Damian truly become saints for our time. Perhaps even more so when we learn they were Arab physicians from the area now called Syria. Healing role models come from all backgrounds. Thank the frontline healthcare workers in your own town. They are likely from diverse backgrounds as well.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8; Luke 9:43b-45 (454). *"Fill us at daybreak with your kindness."*

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



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