

Sunday, Jan 01, 2023

And let it begin with me

"The world must be educated to love Peace, to build it up and defend it." With these words, Pope Paul VI in 1968 called us each to personal responsibility for keeping the peace. Since then, successive popes have related the quest for peace to fighting poverty, protecting creation, defeating racism, caring for migrants, supporting education, ensuring opportunities to work, and overcoming indifference. As the pandemic bloomed, Pope Francis described peace as cultivating a "culture of care." Building peace includes encountering people outside our typical social cocoons. It necessarily involves creating good politics and living with hope. Make peace your personal priority.

OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD
TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). *"The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!"*

Monday, Jan 02, 2023

Spirituality is a friendly endeavor

Is there anyone you regard as a "spiritual friend"? Someone with whom you share your Christian journey and who helps you grow in faith? Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen were two such friends who were monks together for a while and later both became bishops. They lived in a time—the fourth century—when there was great conflict and heresy, and the pair worked to keep the church united on the right path. Gregory wrote of their friendship: "We seemed to be two bodies with a single spirit ... Our single object and ambition was virtue, and a life of hope in the blessings that are to come ..." If it's true that you are the company you keep, choose wisely!

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). *"Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us?"*

Tuesday, Jan 03, 2023

The name above all others

The Most Holy Name of Jesus occurs in early January to signify the eight days since Jesus' birth—when, as a Jew, he was presented in the Temple and given a name. As the Bible reminds us, an angel told Joseph: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Today is also the main feast day of the Jesuit religious order, as their name derives from Jesus' name. Celebrate as suggested by today's most famous Jesuit, Pope Francis: "It means thinking like him, loving like him, seeing like him, walking like him. It means doing what he did and with his same sentiments."

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:29—3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."*

Wednesday, Jan 04, 2023

Stand firm for justice

Today, the church celebrates the feast of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first person born in the future United States to be canonized, and the de facto founder of America's Catholic school system. Seton was also a voice of reason in a time of rampant contradiction in the realm of human rights. Though her family owned slaves, Seton apparently rejected the practice and spoke lovingly of African Americans. Though her order did not protest the

practice, and in some cases benefitted from the labor of enslaved individuals themselves, recent studies have found no evidence that Seton herself ever engaged in the practice—a rarity for her time and social class. Let's pray that a spirit of holy resistance will fill us all in the fight against injustice—in a world where up to 50 million people live in modern slavery.

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42 (207). *"The person who acts in righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous."*

Thursday, Jan 05, 2023

Live and learn—and pass it on

Education was of supreme importance to both Saint John Neumann (1811-60), who is memorialized today, and to scientist and devout Christian George Washington Carver, who died on Jan. 5, 1943. Both men obtained an education long before it was seen as a birthright. Both made enormous social contributions as a result: Neumann to faith development of the masses; Carver to applied agricultural science impacting the country in numerous ways. For them, cleverness was never an end in itself; they both believed their talents were given by God to serve others. How does *your* education serve others?

MEMORIAL OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:11-21; John 1:43-51 (208). *"Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."*

Friday, Jan 06, 2023

The door will be opened

Born frail and weak in 1845 near Montreal and orphaned at 12 when both parents died, André Bessette tried a number of trades as a young man, none with much success. He was initially turned away when applying to the Congregation of Holy Cross but was finally accepted and given the humble task of doorkeeper, messenger, and laundry worker at Notre Dame College in Montreal. There he faithfully served for decades. His life of devotion and healing presence eventually attracted legions of visitors and 80,000 prayer requests mailed in each year. "When I joined this community, the superiors showed me the door, and I remained 40 years," he quipped near the end of his long life. Make yours a life of simple service and devotion—and a sense of humor won't hurt either!

MEMORIAL OF ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 5:5-13; Mark 1:7-11 or Luke 3:23-28 or 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38 (209). *"I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals."*

Saturday, Jan 07, 2023

Signs of life

All that water at the wedding feast of Cana was used, the story tells us, for "Jewish ceremonial washings." Such washings were prescribed by the Jewish *Halakha*, or body of laws derived from the Torah. The fact that Jesus turned pure water for cleansing into wine for drinking would have sent a powerful message of the true nature of "living water" to the wedding guests. That same message is transmitted to us as simple table wine becomes the blood of Christ at every Eucharist. Like the wedding guests at Cana, don't hesitate to drink deeply from the cup of life Jesus offers.

CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY
TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 5:14-21; John 2:1-11 (210). *"Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory."*

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



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