

Sunday, Aug 20, 2023

That all may be one

The spirit of division is about being right. The spirit of unity is about embracing Christ. In which direction are we heading? Ecumenism seems an almost quaint idea in the 21st-century church. Other issues seem to have become more critical for many than getting Christians on the same page. Yet a divided church is a scandal to a world that questions our sincerity if we can't even agree on Jesus. Dialogue with others without the need to criticize beliefs or change minds. Create opportunities to pray, study, work, and mission together with local Christians. They will know we are Christians by our love.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32; Matthew 15:21-28 (118). *"For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."*

Monday, Aug 21, 2023

Look beyond the wardrobe

The saying "Clothes make the man" was certainly not true for Pope Pius X. He was born poor, teased at school for his tattered clothes, and sometimes carried his shoes to make them last longer. When he became pope in 1903, remaining as humble as his origins, he said the only thing that had changed about him was the color of his cassock from black to white—a fact he sometimes forgot since he had to be reminded not to wipe his pen on his clothes anymore. Let Pius X remind you to stay true to your authentic self by keeping your life simple.

MEMORIAL OF PIUS X, POPE

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 2:11-19; Matthew 19:16-22 (419). *"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven."*

Tuesday, Aug 22, 2023

Eight days a week

The Queenship of Mary doubles as a liturgical bookend, concluding eight full days since celebrating her Assumption. In liturgical language, these eight days form an octave. Most simply, an octave extends the celebration of a church feast from a single day into eight. Historically, Christianity inherited the practice from Judaism, which, for instance, celebrates eight days of Hanukkah and circumcision eight days after a boy's birth—the latter being why many baptismal fonts are octagonal. If a week is seven days, then the eighth day begins a new week—the eighth day signaling the start of something new or renewal, just as Baptism makes a person new or "born again." Honor Mary anew by praying the Salve Regina today.

MEMORIAL OF THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 6:11-24a; Matthew 19:23-30 (420). *"For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible."*

Wednesday, Aug 23, 2023

Go deep

Today is the feast of Rose of Lima, patron of Latin America. You can visit her tomb in the historic center of Lima, Peru, a place teeming with activity. Enter the Dominican monastery where she is buried and leave behind the noise and heat of the street. Descend

a narrow passage; bow your head to clear the low ceiling. You'll emerge into a cool, hushed room with her tomb at the far end. It is a holy place—a place you'd never know if you didn't go deep. How do you get to the deep sacred space within your daily life?

MEMORIAL OF ROSE OF LIMA, TERTIARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 9:6-15; Matthew 20:1-16 (421). *"Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

Thursday, Aug 24, 2023

Pure faith

Tradition has it that Bartholomew was tortured to death for the faith. Scholars believe that he is mentioned in scripture by both his name and by the name Nathaniel. Nathaniel was famously complimented by Jesus for being a true Israelite, with no duplicity. Purity of heart, in fact, is how most holy disciples attain holiness. Through profound connection to God, they avoid guile, duplicity, and other sins that are so easy to fall into when God slides into the background. Saint Bartholomew, help us maintain a clean heart.

FEAST OF BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

TODAY'S READINGS: Revelation 21:9b-14; John 1:45-51 (629). *"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, 'Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him.'"*

Friday, Aug 25, 2023

Women will not remain silent!

Do you know all 333 women of the Bible? There are at least that many, writes Catholic commentator Alice Camille, and each is worth getting to know. Visible presence of women in leadership roles has long suffered from hierarchical structures rooted in patriarchal values. The establishment of the biblical canon reflects this as well with women's voices and stories rarely included except in support roles. Stories such as that of Ruth and Naomi that survived the canonical cutting-room floor are a beacon of light and remind us that despite overwhelming suppression of women's voices, they could not be silenced. How are you called to give voice or to amplify suppressed voices today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22; Matthew 22:34-40 (423). *"Ruth said, 'Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you!'"*

Saturday, Aug 26, 2023

A ruling from the bench

Jesus speaks of the scribes and Pharisees sitting on the "chair of Moses." Archeologists have uncovered stone chairs in prominent places in ancient synagogues where such leaders presumably sat as they pronounced on all things related to Jewish Law and Tradition. When it came to fulfilling the spirit of the Law rather than just the letter, Jesus called out the hypocrisy of those who did not practice what they preach. In any field—politics, business, religion—leaders need to be judged not by the eloquence of their words but by the integrity of their actions. That goes for all of us, wherever we take our seat!

TODAY'S READINGS: Ruth 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17; Matthew 23:1-12 (424). *"The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses.... but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice."*

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



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