

Sunday, Aug 27, 2023

The value in variety

A founder of the NAACP, W.E.B. Du Bois knew the cure for racism wasn't simply telling the truth. It was inducing people to act on it. The first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1895, Du Bois dreamed broadly of a world of "valuable variety ... in height and weight, color and skin, hair and nose and lip.... Each effort to stop this freedom of being," he argued, "is a blow at democracy—that real democracy which is reservoir and opportunity.... There can be no perfect democracy curtailed by color, race, or poverty." Let us act on this truth.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 22:19-23; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 16:13-20 (121). "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven."

Monday, Aug 28, 2023

The great romance

Saint Augustine is known as a great thinker—arguably the most significant Christian theologian after Saint Paul. But his writing is as much heart as head. He is also known for leaving behind a life of hedonism. But he remained a passionate man—only, after his conversion, passion for God alone. "Late have I loved you, O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you!" he lamented. It's never too late to be swept away by what Augustine has to say: "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement."

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10; Matthew 23:13-22 (425). "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You lock the Kingdom of heaven before men."

Tuesday, Aug 29, 2023

Prepare the way

Painting after painting shows John the Baptist pointing to Jesus. John knows it's not about him: "He who is coming after me is mightier than I" (Matthew 3:11) and "I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of Him.... He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 2:28-30). Christian tradition also calls him John the Precursor and John the Forerunner, prepping us for the Messiah by being something of a prototype. Like Jesus, he's conceived miraculously. Both preach repentance, have disciples, and suffer in death. But as Saint Peter Julian Eymard knew, "The true secret of love consists in this—we must forget self like Saint John the Baptist and exalt and glorify the Lord."

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 (426); Mark 6:17-29 (634). "We drew courage through our God to speak to you the Gospel of God."

Wednesday, Aug 30, 2023

Make a better choice

A mother of 11 foster children always had a gaggle of kids buzzing around her. They were happy and well cared for. When there was even a hint of one crossing the line from lively to obnoxious, she simply said, "Make a better choice." Amazingly, they did. Those are powerful words. How can you make a better choice today?

What will help you walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his Kingdom and glory? This advice from Saint Francis de Sales might prove useful: "Never miss an opportunity to do good."

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13, Matthew 23:27-32 (427). "We treated each one of you as a father treats his children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you walk in a manner worthy of ... God."

Thursday, Aug 31, 2023

Education for the whole person

As a school year begins anew, it's worth taking a moment to appreciate the proud tradition of Catholic education. In the United States, Catholic religious orders have built an extensive network of primary, secondary, and college-level institutions whose shared mission has been education of the whole person: spiritual, intellectual, and human development. Millions have been positively impacted by these schools, including many poor people who have improved their quality of life. Offer a prayer of thanks for the educators and others who pour their energies into this holy and wholistic education.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 3:7-13; Matthew 24:42-51 (428). "Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."

Friday, Sep 01, 2023

Celebrate the season of creation

In Catholic culture we use the phrase "care of creation" in our work to protect the Earth and develop sustainable ways to live. This phrase is deliberate because it underscores the inherent connection between God and all that is. Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*, "The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ." On this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, let us renew our commitment to care for one another, land and sea, all creatures great and small, as together we move into the fullness of God to which all are called.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Matthew 25:1-13 (429). "Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not a human being but God, who also gives the Holy Spirit to you."

Saturday, Sep 02, 2023

Talent contest

The parable of the Talents is about much more than money. It speaks of the gifts that God has given to each of us and how we choose to "invest" those gifts in the community. Are we seeking only the most limited return, for ourselves? Or are we sharing our gifts, doing our part to help build up the community? The questions are more than hypothetical, for one day, at an unexpected hour, we will be called to account. Invest wisely for a generous return!

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-11; Matthew 25:14-30 (430). "Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?"

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



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