

Sunday, Jul 30, 2023

String your own pearls

Jewelry is a matter of taste. Some folks like gold; others prefer silver. But in Jewish tradition, the pearl is a metaphor for valuable teaching. Our "pearl of great price," then, is the teaching upon which we build everything else, the motivation that governs our decision-making. What's yours? For some, it's that all life is sacred. For others, the common good must be served. Still others take the preferential option for the poor, or champion stewardship of creation. Remember: You don't have to choose just one.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12; Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 13:44-52 (109). *"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls."*

Monday, Jul 31, 2023

Speak his name without shame

Spanish priest Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus (along with Saints Peter Faber and Francis Xavier) in Paris in 1541. Members of this religious order are known as Jesuits. Today, the Jesuits are the largest male religious order in the church, and Pope Francis is the first Jesuit pope. The term Jesuit was originally meant as an insult, meaning "someone who too frequently used the name of Jesus." Ignatius never used the term, but members later embraced it with positive meaning. After all, how could anyone use the name of Jesus too much? Take a cue from the Jesuits and don't hold back!

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:15-24, 30-34; Matthew 13:31-35 (401). *"The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field."*

Tuesday, Aug 01, 2023

Our saving grace

Alphonsus gave us much, but perhaps the greatest gift was his fight against the Jansenist heresy, encapsulated in his 1748 volume *Moral Theology*. Thanks to Alphonsus, Catholicism has been able to steer a middle path between a darkly pessimistic view of human worth on the one hand and moral laxity on the other. Jansenists held an extreme view of original sin, believing only some are pre-ordained for salvation, saying grace had little chance of saving the rest—even through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Alphonsus encourages us to trust and use the sacrament, but also to "acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends."

MEMORIAL OF ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 33:7-11; 34:5b-9, 28; Matthew 13:36-43 (402). *"Pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."*

Wednesday, Aug 02, 2023

Meet your maker

As we honor Saints Eusebius and Peter Julian Eymard, two staunch defenders of the faith during their times, we would do well to remember that "faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love," writes Pope Francis in *Lumen*

Fidei. How do we encounter God? Any embrace of love is a start, but Peter Eymard is more specific: "Happy the soul that knows how to find Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and in the Eucharist all things!"

MEMORIALS OF EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI, BISHOP; PETER JULIAN EYMARD, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 34:29-35; Matthew 13:44-46 (403). *"The skin of his face had become radiant while he conversed with the LORD."*

Thursday, Aug 03, 2023

God's dwelling place

Biblical faith is unique in its image of a universal God who nevertheless chooses to dwell among his people. We have an intimate portrait of this in the Exodus story where Moses is instructed to build a tent that the people of Israel are to carry with them as they sojourn through the desert toward the Promised Land. We can take heart in the notion that God is with us as well, along for the ride so to speak. He will not leave us orphaned. Call on God today, he's right there with you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 40:16-21, 34-38; Matthew 13:47-53 (404). *"He spread the tent over the Dwelling and put the covering on top of the tent, as the LORD had commanded him."*

Friday, Aug 04, 2023

The garden of the soul

John Vianney was dedicated to helping people understand and live the Catholic faith. On the street, in the confessional, and in his writings, John offered wisdom and counsel to encourage people. He wrote many small catechetical teachings collected within his "Little Catechism." In one, John writes, "The Holy Spirit is like a gardener cultivating our souls." The soul as a garden is a beautiful image to meditate on. What does your garden look like? How are you growing in your relationship with God? With John, let us pray his words: "O God, send me Your Spirit to teach me what I am and what You are."

MEMORIAL OF JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37; Matthew 13:54-58 (405). *"Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds?"*

Saturday, Aug 05, 2023

Take a holy walk

The 16th-century Italian priest Saint Philip Neri liked to organize a walk through Rome with a few of his friends and acquaintances, visiting churches along the journey. It was a nice way to combine friendly conversation and a shared religious activity. The churches they visited—St. Peter's Basilica, St. Paul Outside-the-Walls, St. Sebastian's, St. John Lateran, Holy Cross-in-Jerusalem, St. Lawrence-Outside-the Walls, and the Basilica of St. Mary Major—became known as the Seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome and the walk is now repeated annually on Wednesday of Holy Week. Seek out holy places wherever you live—they can be a refuge in difficult times.

MEMORIAL OF THE DEDICATION OF THE BASILICA OF ST. MARY MAJOR

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 25:1, 8-17; Matthew 14:1-12 (406).

"This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants."

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



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