

Sunday, May 07, 2023

Appointed to the task

We see them in some of our parishes standing near the presider at Mass: men dressed sort of like priests but with a diagonal or odd-looking stole. What are deacons for, we may wonder?

Deacons assist priests in visiting the sick and provide service in the parish community. They can preach, witness marriages, perform Baptisms, and preside at funeral services outside of Mass. While they're ordained clergy, they may also be married and serve without pay. The permanent diaconate is a special call for those "filled with the Spirit and wisdom." Know someone who fits this description? Encourage him to apply.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12 (52).

"Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task."

Monday, May 08, 2023

Sanctity can't be rushed

Of the approximately 10,000 canonized saints, there are only 11 from the United States, and only three of those were U.S.-born. Of course, part of the reason is that the United States is a relatively young country. Give it time, Blessed Teresa Demjanovich would likely say, because she believed her calling was to remind everyone that they are called, regardless of vocation, to be a saint. Born in New Jersey in 1901, Demjanovich is one of a growing list of American candidates for sainthood and the first to be beatified on American soil. She was a Sister of Charity for only two years before dying at the age of 26. Take to heart her message that everyone is called to a life of holiness and aspire to join her on that list.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 14:5-18; John 14:21-26 (285). *"We will come to him and make our dwelling with him."*

Tuesday, May 09, 2023

Advantage from adversity

On this day in 328, 30-year-old Saint Athanasius was elected the new bishop of Alexandria. If that seems young, it was. Even though he helped win the day at the Council of Nicea—taking on Arius and others who denied Christ's full divinity—his elevation as bishop instigated years of struggle with political and ecclesial foes. At issue: Athanasius' stubborn refusal to water down anything in the Nicene Creed. Thus, in the 45 years Athanasius served as bishop, he was exiled a total of five times, 17 years in all. May Athanasius provide a lesson for us all about turning adversity into advantage. While in exile, he did much writing—including a definitive biography of Saint Anthony that would influence other future saints, including Augustine.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 14:19-28; John 14:27-31a (286). *"It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God."*

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

A mighty pen

On this day in 1990 the famed Southern writer Walker Percy died, one of the clarion voices of reason in the troubled climate of his day. He lived through Jim Crow, being born near the height of it, and wrote with the power of his deep Catholic faith to issues of the day. A graduate of medical school, Percy would in the end become

one who probed minds and hearts with the pen—including his own. He famously said, "A fine writer's thoughtful analysis of his own trials and errors is valuable indeed." May we emulate his admirable introspection.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:1-6; John 15:1-8 (287). *"Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."*

Thursday, May 11, 2023

Rejoice and be glad!

Doesn't everyone seek a bit of joy? Jesus tells his disciples, "Remain in my love ... so that ... your joy may be complete." Our tradition uplifts those who are joyful even amid setbacks. The concept of the Paschal Mystery points to resurrection—joy—hidden in even the darkest times. Pope Francis often encourages church leaders to show some joy, and he reminds the faithful that God "created us because he wants us to be happy." Jesus' first miracle enabled wedding guests to drink wine and celebrate. Does your faith in God bring you joy? Let others see it.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:7-21; John 15:9-11 (288). *"I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete."*

Friday, May 12, 2023

Here's to good friends

Saint Teresa of Ávila had a deep understanding of the value of friendship, not only with God but with one another. "What a great favor God does to those he places in the company of good people," she wisely wrote. Negative people can actually affect your well-being on every level: spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. Numerous studies conclude that surrounding yourself with good people boosts self-esteem, helps you bear stress and grief more effectively, encourages healthy behavior, and increases your chances for a longer and happier life. Your time is a valuable—and limited—resource. Surround yourself with friends and associates who will do you good. Then return the favor.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 15:22-31; John 15:12-17 (289). *"I have called you friends."*

Saturday, May 13, 2023

Holy East and West

When's the last time you called a priest "Swami" instead of "Father"? If the priest was today's commemorative, Benedictine Father Bede Griffiths, you would be correct using the title. Griffiths (1906-93), a British-born priest, was sent to India in 1955 to establish a Benedictine monastery. There he studied Indian spirituality and incorporated into the monastery cultural elements of a Hindu ashram. He became known to his congregants as Swami Dayananda, a name that means "bliss of compassion." Watch a three-minute trailer of the film documentary of Father Bede's life and teaching, *A Human Search*.

EASTER WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 16:1-10; John 15:18-21 (290). *"Because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you."*

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



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