

Sunday, Nov 12, 2023

Last things

November's a good time to consider our responsibilities to those who depend on us and may be nearing the end of life. (Or perhaps we're getting long in years ourselves.) We know our social obligations: Write a will, make our medical preferences known to doctors and family members. But Catholics have other duties too. Offering forgiveness and being forgiven are vital issues at the end of life—and every year of life. We have to ensure the sacraments are available to the elderly and the sick. How vigils, funerals, and burials are conducted matters to us. Reflect on these things now.

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 6:12-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13 (154). *"Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.'"*

Monday, Nov 13, 2023

The underestimated shall be esteemed

Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini was born Maria Francesca in Italy in 1850, the youngest of 13 children. She was small and had poor health. Because of her frailty, she was rejected by the religious community she wanted to join. She founded her own order and dreamed of becoming a missionary to the Far East like the saint whose name she took. But the pope sent her west instead, to the United States—and she founded 67 missionary institutions to serve the sick and poor from New York to Chicago to Los Angeles. Nine years after her death, her religious institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, became missionaries in China. Don't underestimate the power of God or yourself!

MEMORIAL OF FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 1:1-7; Luke 17:1-6 (491). *"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."*

Tuesday, Nov 14, 2023

Put your hope in order

As we inch toward Advent, it's good to revisit the theme of hope. Consider this, from Pope Francis two years ago today, for the World Day of the Poor: "The hope born of the Gospel has nothing to do with a passive expectation that things may be better tomorrow, but with making God's promise of salvation concrete today.... Christian hope is not the naïve, even adolescent, optimism of those who hope that things may change [and] in the meantime go on with life; it has to do with building daily, by concrete gestures, the kingdom of love, justice, and fraternity that Jesus inaugurated." Or as Italian Bishop Don Tonio Bello would say, "We cannot be content to hope. We have to organize hope." How will you organize hope today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 2:23-3:9; Luke 17:7-10 (492). *"Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love."*

Wednesday, Nov 15, 2023

Live a life of great service

The great Dominican friar Albertus Magnus died on this day in 1280, after a long life of dedication to the church as a scholar, scientist, and briefly the bishop of Regensburg. He shunned excess and was known as a mediator—which, in his day, was a complicated matter, given the ongoing Crusades. We, too, live in

an age of war, economic inequality, and general spiritual laxity. We owe it to ourselves to look to the German Dominican for inspiration to live a more rigorous life of spiritual seeking, so as to find lasting solutions to the problems of our day.

MEMORIAL OF ALBERT THE GREAT, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 6:1-11; Luke 17:11-19 (493). *"For those who keep the holy precepts hallowed shall be found holy, and those learned in them will have ready a response."*

Thursday, Nov 16, 2023

Extraordinary sacrifice in ordinary clothing

It's easy to think that martyrs were people completely different from us, but Christian courage doesn't always have a cinematic face. Father Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J., five other Jesuits, and their housekeeper and her daughter were murdered in El Salvador. Ellacuría and his fellow Jesuits had publicly defended human rights and ministered to poor people in spite of intense government repression. May their dedication to justice inspire us to do our part in creating a more just world order that protects those who speak truth to power.

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 7:22b-8:1; Luke 17:20-25 (494). *"For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you."*

Friday, Nov 17, 2023

A delicate matter

The Catholic Church identifies well over a dozen saints as patrons of lacemaking, lace workers, and related textile workers. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary is among these patrons who possibly became associated with lacemaking as it is a craft often seen as "immaculate" and virtuous, much like the saints themselves. But lacemakers and other artisan workers also often sat on the edge of poverty. These were the people who benefitted from the kind deeds of the likes of Saint Elizabeth, who roamed the streets near her castle passing out alms for the poor and tending to the sick. Take a moment to consider the artisans and craftspeople of our own time who could benefit from your patronage.

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 13:1-9; Luke 17:26-37 (495). *"For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen."*

Saturday, Nov 18, 2023

Let freedom ring

In 1818, when Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne came from France to the United States, she was dismayed that slavery still operated "in the land of the free." Yet, when she opened foundations in Louisiana, the sisters were given slaves along with their households. In 1830 she accepted a slave in lieu of a tuition payment. She insisted that slaves in the household be treated well, arguing, "They have the same soul as we; they have been redeemed by the same blood and received into the same Church," but, like all of us, she was clearly enmeshed in social structures in need of redemption. Work for a society that truly is free at last.

MEMORIAL OF ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9; Luke 18:1-8 (496). *"Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?"*

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



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