

**Sunday, Oct 15, 2023**

### Stretch your spirituality

Your doctor says that even a little exercise is important to keep the body flexible. Joints that move regularly are body parts that can function well a while longer. Walking 20 minutes a day or taking a water aerobics class are easy ways to lubricate the joints we need to perform our daily tasks. Saint Paul reminds us that flexibility is also a significant aspect of the spiritual life. Can we accept good times and bad, seasons of plenty or want, with the same light grip? Moving through circumstances fluidly makes for a freer life, and a gentler death.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22:1-14 (142). *"I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need."*

**Monday, Oct 16, 2023**

### A heart as wide as the world

Depicted as a flaming, shining, bleeding heart, pierced by a lance, encircled by a crown of thorns, and topped with a cross, the Sacred Heart of Jesus symbolizes Christ's boundless, suffering love for humanity. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is one of the best known and most practiced of all Catholic devotions, but the 17th-century French Visitation nun who received the revelation of this devotion, Margaret Mary Alacoque, was doubted in her lifetime, and the practice wasn't officially recognized until 75 years after her death. Incorporate an aspiration, or short prayer, to the Sacred Heart each day to remind you that you are unconditionally loved. Examples are "Sacred Heart of Jesus, make my heart like yours," "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in your love for me," or "Sacred Heart of Jesus, may you be known, loved, and imitated!"

MEMORIAL OF MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE, RELIGIOUS

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 1:1-7; Luke 11:29-32 (467). *"At the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here."*

**Tuesday, Oct 17, 2023**

### Bread of Life, bread for the poor

Saint Ignatius Theophorus wrote seven epistles while trudging from Antioch to Rome. As Roman soldiers pushed him toward martyrdom in a coliseum, Ignatius decried a different enemy of Christian faith: docetism, whose Christian adherents claimed Jesus never existed physically on Earth—that he only appeared to. In denying the Incarnation, Ignatius says, such heretics also fail to see the Lord's presence in the Eucharist and in the poor. "They have no concern for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the oppressed, none for the prisoner or the one released, none for the hungry or thirsty." And "they abstain from Eucharist" because "they refuse to acknowledge the Eucharist." Ignatius, help us to see Jesus—in all the places he said he'd be.

MEMORIAL OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, BISHOP, MARTYR

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 1:16-25; Luke 11:37-41 (468). *"As to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you."*

**Wednesday, Oct 18, 2023**

### Pack lightly for the journey of faith

Today we celebrate the feast of the evangelist Luke. Best known for his gospel, Luke was a dedicated disciple of Paul who goes so far as to join Paul in prison—twice. You can read Luke's account

of the early Christians in the Acts of the Apostles. But first, read what Luke says in today's gospel, which gives Jesus' directives to the disciples who are serving as his advance team. These directives are simple but not easy: "Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals"—and they remain amazingly relevant to living a simple life of faith. How can you enact them in your own life?

FEAST OF LUKE, EVANGELIST

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Timothy 4:10-17b; Luke 10:1-9 (661). *"Luke is the only one with me."*

**Thursday, Oct 19, 2023**

### Reconciling our past

Today is the memorial of several men who were killed for evangelizing native people in Quebec. The documentation of these encounters is almost entirely from the perspective of European American Christians, with missionaries as heroic martyrs and natives as murderous heathens. The truth is much more complicated. Pope Francis' 2022 apology to indigenous people in Canada and the U.S. Catholic Indigenous Boarding School Accountability and Healing Project are two efforts to look at the bigger picture of Christian-Indigenous relationships with accountability and reconciliation as goals. Join these efforts by exploring Native American culture and history.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DE BRÉBEUF AND ISAAC JOGUES, PRIESTS, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 3:21-30; Luke 11:47-54 (470). *"Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge."*

**Friday, Oct 20, 2023**

### GPS for the soul

Spiritual direction is a great tool for navigating with God the ups and downs of everyday life. The practice involves a one-on-one relationship with a spiritual director who helps us to see how God is moving in our lives. A director listens and offers wisdom such as that of Paul of the Cross: "Let everything in creation draw you to God. Refresh your mind with some innocent recreation and needful rest, if it were only to saunter through the garden or the fields, listening to the sermon preached by the flowers, the trees, the meadows, the sun, the sky, and the whole universe." In honor of Saint Paul cultivate the art of listening wisely.

MEMORIAL OF PAUL OF THE CROSS, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 4:1-8; Luke 12:1-7 (471). *"Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God."*

**Saturday, Oct 21, 2023**

### A higher law

All of us run afoul of the law at some point or another, even if it's as minor as a parking ticket. Laws, religious or secular, are there to set standards and impose order. They have their purpose, but if we hope to be released from all that afflicts us in this life, we'll need a different kind of law—the law of love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. As 20th-century monk and mystic Thomas Merton explains, "The first obligation of the Christian is to maintain their freedom from all empty forms of legalism" and "live by a higher law—the law of grace and love." Let faith lead you there.

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 4:13, 16-18; Luke 12:8-12 (472).

*"Brothers and sisters: It was not through the law that the promise was made to Abraham and his descendants . . . it depends on faith."*

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



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