

Sunday, Sep 03, 2023

It's a wonderful life

Our days are engulfed in chaos, conflict, and dispiriting news. Then along comes a director like Frank Capra (1897-1991), churning out what have been called "fantasies of good will," imposing order with his ragged little messiahs who take meaningful stands against king-sized injustices. A self-described "Christmas Catholic," Capra fought his moral battles on the silver screen. He believed each person is "essentially good, a living atom of divinity.... Films must be made to say these things, to counteract the violence and the meanness, to buy time to demobilize the hatreds." Take your stand. Tell a story of hope.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27 (124). *"Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."*

Monday, Sep 04, 2023

Come aside and rest awhile

In a Prayer for Labor Day, the U.S. bishops invite us to ask God: "Make a place in our hearts for compassion to the men and women who labor tirelessly for basic necessities." Labor has always held a place of dignity within our faith. Scripture tells us that the laborer is worthy of his hire (1 Tim. 5:18), and many a church document, including *Rerum Novarum*, outline the value of workers and their work: "Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the working classes should be carefully watched over, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits which they create." And, today, in honor of our labor, it's time to take a break.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 4:16-30 (431). *"Is this not the son of Joseph?"*

Tuesday, Sep 05, 2023

The first daughter of charity

It's not every day that a Catholic saint is honored with a United Nations resolution. But then, Mother Teresa is hardly an everyday saint. The U.N. honored the famous nun from Kolkata, known the world over for her hands-on care of the poor, with a resolution in 2013. It declared that on the September 5th anniversary of Mother Teresa's death each year, the world would now observe an International Day of Charity. Let's take her at her word: "Love is not patronizing and charity isn't about pity, it is about love. Charity and love are the same—with charity you give love, so don't just give money but reach out your hand instead."

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11; Luke 4:31-37 (432). *"All of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness."*

Wednesday, Sep 06, 2023

Pray for the persecuted and forgotten

On this day, many Christians of the Eastern tradition celebrate the feast of Saint Donatian and his companions, a group of lesser-known fifth-century martyrs driven out of North Africa by the Arian King Huneric, who persecuted a great many Trinitarians for their faith. Though we may not today face death for our confession, many of our brothers and sisters around the world do, and it is for them that we must pray with the help of Donatian and all who died

for the name of Christ. Even more, we are tasked to help them materially if we can, since—as the Lord says—whatsoever we do for the least of his siblings, we do for him.

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:1-8; Luke 4:38-44 (433). *"We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the holy ones because of the hope reserved for you in heaven."*

Thursday, Sep 07, 2023

School days, Golden Rule days

It's back-to-school season. Learning is foundational to our democracy and also to informed faith. In 2,000 years' time, Christianity has overcome countless heresies (a type of twisting of the belief) and accumulated many saints, martyrs, stories, and traditions. With school back in session, consider sending yourself to "school" to learn more about your own religion. Check out study materials from the U.S. Catholic bishops and formed.org, a program both individuals and parishes can use for faith formation. Make a choice to grow in wisdom and understanding.

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:9-14; Luke 5:1-11 (434). *"Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."*

Friday, Sep 08, 2023

A nativity set for the ages

The church officially celebrates three Nativities: the Nativity of Jesus, the Son of God (Christmas); the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 June); and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 September). These events tell us everything we need to know about God, faith, and the path to salvation. Through Jesus' Incarnation, we learn that God is with us—always and everywhere. Through John's witness we come to understand that we are not God—not even close—and we must prepare ourselves to welcome God's great goodness into our lives. And through Mary, we are shown the meaning of true discipleship—how to answer God's call and follow Christ through the joyful, sorrowful, and luminous mysteries of our lives in faith. Celebrate this dynamic trio by living in their light.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 5:1-4a or Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23 (636). *"They shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"*

Saturday, Sep 09, 2023

Give us this day some peace

"Racism has been part of the social fabric of America since its European colonization. Whether it be the tragic past of Native Americans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or Blacks, the story is one of slavery, peonage, economic exploitation, brutal repression, and cultural neglect." This observation from the 1979 bishops' pastoral *Brothers and Sisters to Us* is why the church in the United States has established today as a "Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities" to promote healing of the racial divides of our nation. Make an honest examination of conscience regarding your thoughts, words, and deeds toward people of other ethnic and racial backgrounds.

MEMORIAL OF PETER CLAVER, PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:21-23; Luke 6:1-5 (436). *"You once were alienated and hostile in mind because of evil deeds."*

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



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