

**Sunday, Sep 10, 2023**

### **The long loneliness**

"Church" means assembly: It is not good for us to be alone. Today's Suicide Prevention Day reminds us that loneliness is an unhealthy condition. More than 700,000 people die by suicide each year: about 132 a day in the United States. For every suicide, there are more than 20 attempts. Mental illness and substance abuse contribute to the crisis, but marginalized groups are at highest risk: migrants, indigenous people, those who identify as LGBTQ+, and prisoners. The feeling of alienation is real but also preventable. Call or text the crisis hotline at 988 to seek help for yourself or someone you love.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20 (127). *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

**Monday, Sep 11, 2023**

### **A day to remember those who gave everything**

Today, the anniversary of the largest terrorist attack in American history, is a day to call to mind those who rushed in to help, at great cost. The first certified fatality of the attacks was Father Mychal Judge, Franciscan friar and New York City Fire Department chaplain, who rushed to the World Trade Center to help. During his life, he was known for ministering to the marginalized and for the words on a prayer card he often distributed: "Lord, take me where you want me to go. Let me meet who you want me to meet. Tell me what you want me to say. And keep me out of your way." Honor his legacy and make his humble prayer yours today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 1:24-2:3; Luke 6:6-11 (437). *"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"*

**Tuesday, Sep 12, 2023**

### **On Earth we your children invoke your sweet name**

Names are a big deal in the Bible. More than a moniker, the names of people—and God—capture, convey, and even conjure a being's very essence. It's why the Hebrews refused, out of respect, to speak God's holiest name and why "taking the Lord's name in vain" is forbidden. We see in biblical history how life-changing experiences prompt a person's change of name, as when Sarai becomes Sarah and Saul becomes Paul. When Jesus talks of acting "in my name," he affirms a power and presence invoked by simply uttering his name. Today, heed Venerable Bruno Lanteri, founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, who instructed: simply "think of Mary, call on Mary."

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 2:6-15; Luke 6:12-19 (438). *"He chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, ..."*

**Wednesday, Sep 13, 2023**

### **Always speak the words of light**

With seemingly never-ending revelations of ministerial misconduct, today's feast of Saint John Chrysostom is a sight for sore eyes. The eminent fourth-century preacher and teacher—whose name is a transliteration of the Greek for "golden mouth"—was surely a product of his day. But he was also guided by the Holy Spirit, who inspired him to be baptized as an adult and denounce corruption in the church while serving as a priest and

later as archbishop of Constantinople. As we remember his legacy today, let's take courage to also stand for truth and against all that dishonors the call of the gospel.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 6:20-26 (439). *"Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

**Thursday, Sep 14, 2023**

### **By the wood of the cross**

Today's feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross goes back to early days in church history. Saint Helena was the mother of Emperor Constantine (the first Roman emperor to embrace the faith), and Helena is said to have found the actual crucifix of Jesus in Jerusalem in the fourth century, spurring significant devotion to the Holy Cross. This devotion has had staying power perhaps because it helps believers to reflect upon the saving power of Jesus' death. Today when something presents itself as a "cross" to you, take a few moments to contemplate the cross of Christ.

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638). *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish."*

**Friday, Sep 15, 2023**

### **I feel your pain**

Anyone who loves will experience sorrow. It can't be helped. When a loved one suffers, we suffer. The church looks to Our Lady of Sorrows during those difficult times. Mary has been pierced by the sword of sorrow many times, including the seven noted by tradition: The prophecy of Simeon, the Flight into Egypt, the lost child Jesus later found in the Temple, meeting Jesus on the road to Calvary, the Crucifixion, and Jesus' removal from the cross and his burial. Listen to the aching beauty of the Stabat Mater hymn recited each year on this memorial and know that you are not alone in your suffering. Mary's empathy is one of the saving graces of our faith. She knows how we feel, and sometimes that's all it takes to get us past the pain.

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 1:1-2, 12-14 (441); John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (639). *"And you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

**Saturday, Sep 16, 2023**

### **Care for the creation God entrusts to us**

High above our heads the ozone layer of the stratosphere absorbs enough of the sun's deadly ultraviolet radiation to make possible life on Earth. But just a few decades ago an alarming depletion of the ozone layer generated worldwide concern over resulting increases in skin cancer, cataracts, and other health issues. These concerns led to the adoption of the Montreal Protocol in 1987, celebrated today, which bans the production of chemicals that cause ozone depletion. In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis applauds the Protocol for helping to protect the Earth, our common home. What can you do for our Earth today?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Timothy 1:15-17; Luke 6:43-49 (442). *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I command?"*

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



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