

Sunday, Feb 07, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Game on

The odds for Super Bowl Sunday 2021 were available last February. Tickets for the game have been on sale for as long. But things don't always happen the way we plan them. Last year, when the Chiefs were pitted against the 49ers, no one imagined how the world would change between one Super Bowl and the next. Still, Jesus comes into our midst wherever we are, whatever our circumstances, and grasps us by the hand. We can't be sure of the game plan for the future. But we can trust that Jesus will be there for us.

TODAY'S READINGS: Job 7:1-4, 6-7; 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23; Mark 1:29-39 (74). *"Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. . . . [Jesus] grasped her hand, and helped her up."*

Monday, Feb 08, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JEROME EMILIANI, PRIEST

Share the love to feel the love

Who hasn't felt all alone before? Perhaps let down or left by a loved one. Perhaps in such dire straits that you thought even God abandoned you. Jerome Emiliani is the saint for those low points. He found God in ultimate isolation—prison. Once free, he became a priest and devoted himself to the abandoned of 16th-century Venice—especially orphans and prostitutes. When you feel stricken with an orphan spirit, remember that you are a beloved child of a loving Creator who will never let you go. Show that same love to those who need you most.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:1-19; Mark 6:53-56 (329). *"They laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak."*

Tuesday, Feb 09, 2021

Be the change

Gregory XV became pope by "popular acclaim" on this day in 1621—interesting, because he changed the tradition soon after. Instead, Gregory made the case for the first secret ballot when electing a pope. He also did other remarkable things, considering his papacy lasted barely two years. He established the first missionary organization of the Vatican, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. And he canonized these beloved saints: Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Francis Xavier, and Philip Neri. Is there a change you've been meaning to make in your own practice of the faith? Begin today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 1:20—2:4a; Mark 7:1-13 (330). *"The Pharisees and scribes questioned him, 'Why do your disciples not follow the tradition?'"*

Wednesday, Feb 10, 2021

MEMORIAL OF SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN

God's assistance rains down

There are few details of Saint Scholastica's early life, but we do know that this sister of Benedict of Nursia entered religious life and lived in a women's monastery a few miles from her brother's in Monte Cassino. Perhaps the most enduring story about Scholastica is one that pits her will against her brother's when she begs him to extend their yearly visit and spend the night in prayer and conversation. Benedict resists, not wishing to break his own rule with a night away from home. Determined, Scholastica asks God for assistance, and a torrential rainstorm ensues that settles

the matter in her favor—Benedict will spend the night. Never doubt that you are worthy to ask for God's help. Trust your heart to know what will draw you closer to God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-17; Mark 7:14-23 (331).

"When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth."

Thursday, Feb 11, 2021

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Turn to Mary

Much of Jesus' ministry had to do with some form of healing, and today's memorial, Our Lady of Lourdes, recognizes Mary's 18 reported appearances in Lourdes, France, a place of pilgrimage known for healing powers. Millions of people a year travel to Lourdes in search of healing; many report spiritual peace and transformation, and a handful even report experiencing cures without medical explanation. Today is also World Day of the Sick. It's an ideal day to ask Mary to intercede on behalf of healing that we need—or that our friends and loved ones desire.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 7:24-30 (332). *"Soon a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him. She came and fell at his feet."*

Friday, Feb 12, 2021

Say their name

This day, falling between World Day of the Sick and Valentine's Day, brings thoughts of how many are left alone after COVID deaths. Advertisers are pushing candy, cards, and flowery bouquets, but the countercultural church also counsels that we pay kind attention to those who are grieving. Practical actions are often most helpful: not only shoveling a driveway or baking some bread, but also reaching out and just listening to whatever is on the grieving person's heart. Sometimes all a grieving person wants is to name the beloved and talk about them again. Being a good listener is a welcome gift.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:1-8; Mark 7:31-37 (333). *"They were exceedingly astonished and they said, 'He has done all things well.'"*

Saturday, Feb 13, 2021

OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Saturdays belong to Mary

For more than a thousand years, the Catholic Church has dedicated most Saturdays to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The reason for choosing Saturday above all other days has been lost to antiquity. But according to tradition, Saturday has been set aside to celebrate the maternal example of Mary and witness to her dedicated discipleship as a woman of God and a follower of Jesus. The weekly memorial serves as a reminder that she is continuously present and operative in the life of the church. Reflect on how the Blessed Virgin Mary has been present and active in your life.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-24; Mark 8:1-10 (334). *"My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."*

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



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