

Sunday, May 09, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

See through God's eye

God does not see as we see, the prophet Isaiah reminds us. To harness the divine perspective, native peoples of western Mexico wove yarn on crossed sticks to represent the eye of God (*ojo de Dios*), which sees in four directions and in all elemental mediums: earth, wind, fire, and water. A God's eye became the portal through which God views the supplicant, or through which those who pray might share the divine vision. Sharing a God's-eye perspective on the world remains the goal of every believer.

Practice seeing others as our compassionate God sees them.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17 (56). *"In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever . . . acts uprightly is acceptable to him."*

Monday, May 10, 2021

MEMORIAL OF DAMIEN DE VEUSTER, PRIEST

Pray for those who heal

The story of Saint Damien de Veuster, a Belgian priest who missioned to quarantined lepers in Hawaii and died of the disease, is extraordinary—although often echoed these days as legions of medical professionals all over the world put themselves in harm's way to treat the sick and dying of COVID. Father Damian is a "martyr of charity," and we've been blessed with multitudes of fearless, generous heroes like him who've expended themselves physically and emotionally to get us through this pandemic. Give thanks to God for our modern martyrs of charity and ask for Father Damian's intercession to keep them safe and send them spiritual strength.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 16:11-15; John 15:26-16:4a (291). *"And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."*

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

EASTER WEEKDAY

Cultivate an appreciation of rural traditions

Though they've disappeared from most modern calendars, two older Catholic observances converge today. One is the petitioning of the "Ice Saints"—Boniface of Tarsus, Pancras, and Servatius—so named because their feasts fall during what were believed in some northern nations to be the last days of spring when a cold snap might damage spring plantings. The other observance, beginning on the Tuesday before Ascension Thursday, is known as the Minor Rogation Days. These two, along with the Catholic observance of Ember Days, are religious celebrations more commonly tied to the rhythms of rural life. They include the blessing of fields for a good harvest and prayers for good weather. Learn more at CatholicRuralLife.org.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 16:22-34; John 16:5-11 (292). *"His household rejoiced at having come to faith in God."*

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

MEMORIALS OF NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS; PANCRAS, MARTYR

Religious freedom is a timeless concern

Sometimes it is difficult to relate to the martyrs of the early church because their lives are so different from our own. Nereus and Achilles were Roman soldiers who had participated in carrying out persecutions of Christians. In a "miracle of faith," they were converted and died their own martyred deaths in the late first

century. Pancras was a 14-year-old martyr of the same era who was beheaded because he publicly affirmed his faith in Jesus Christ. On this Easter weekday, give thanks for the ability to freely worship and pray for those around the world who do not enjoy such freedom.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 17:15, 22—18:1; John 16:12-15 (293). *"But when he comes, the Spirit of truth . . . will guide you to all truth."*

Thursday, May 13, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Rise to the occasion

Today's Feast of the Ascension gives wide recognition to a rather complex idea—that Christ both ascended to heaven *and* remains with us. In fact, we get a taste of heaven when we unify ourselves with Jesus in spirit and action. Saint Augustine taught "although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace." From attending Mass to aiding the needy, on this feast day we can all take a step toward unity with Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 4:1-13 or Ephesians 1:17-23; Mark 16:15-20 (58). *"So then the Lord Jesus . . . was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God."*

Friday, May 14, 2021

FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

Abstinence makes the faith grow stronger

Although self-denial is celebrated in all major religions as a virtue, the value isn't so much in the practice as in the motivation. For Christians the virtuous motivation for abstinence of food, drink, or particular desires comes from love. We deny ourselves for God's sake and for the sake of others. Saint Matthias, patron of alcoholics, encouraged abstinence as a way to grow closer to God. He kept his focus on his vocation to spread the gospel and let little distract him from his purpose. What can you do today to keep your focus on love?

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; John 15:9-17 (564). *"This I command you: love one another."*

Saturday, May 15, 2021

EASTER WEEKDAY

Honor the forces of reconciliation

Pope Saint John XXIII taught that wars are never justified. Pope Saint John Paul II wrote to President George W. Bush that the Iraq War was unjust. Pope Benedict XVI questioned whether any war could be called just. Pope Francis, speaking in Hiroshima during his 2019 visit, repeated the positions of the previous popes. Christians face a dilemma, wanting world peace but also needing some protection from those who don't think the same way. The church recognizes a need for the military. But the task of the military should be to maintain peace and set the conditions for reconciliation. On this Armed Forces Day, pray for all our military service members. They have a difficult job.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 18:23-28; John 16:23b-28 (296). *"For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have come to believe that I came from God."*

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



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