

Sunday, Jun 20, 2021

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Heal the human family

Fathers are an unpredictable lot. Some are lovingly remembered as protective and dependable captains who sailed their families to calmer waters through every domestic storm. Others may be lamented as the source of many a squall themselves. We pray this day for both kinds of fathers: those who stayed and those who abandoned ship, the faithful and the faithless, the tender and the tyrant. The church teaches that our world can't be whole until our families are healed. This Father's Day, we pray especially for those who volunteer as benevolent father figures for children in need of one.

TODAY'S READINGS: Job 38:1, 8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Mark 4:35-41 (95). "[Jesus] woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Quiet! Be still!'"

Monday, Jun 21, 2021

MEMORIAL OF ALOYSIUS GONZAGA, RELIGIOUS

Sometimes you have to swim upstream

Discerning one's vocation can be tricky enough, but once you've figured out God's call, you might encounter resistance from others in answering it. Saint Aloysius Gonzaga can relate. As an aristocrat in Renaissance Italy, he was expected to join decadent courtly life and have an accomplished military career. But even in his early teens, Aloysius was dismayed by the violence and licentiousness of his time. Deeply devout, he bucked family and societal expectations and sought a different path. He renounced his inheritance and became a Jesuit. When we encounter pressure to ignore God, may Aloysius help us all stay true.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 12:1-9; Matthew 7:1-5 (371). "The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you."

Tuesday, Jun 22, 2021

MEMORIAL OF JOHN FISHER, BISHOP AND THOMAS MORE, MARTYRS

Truth trumps tyranny

Thomas More shares this feast day with John Fisher—both beheaded for daring to cross England's King Henry VIII in his power grab. Significantly, Henry moved up Fisher's execution day so it wouldn't fall on the feast of another sainted John—John the Baptist, who likewise was beheaded by a king for opposing royal tyranny. It's always the right time to speak truth to power, even when the cost is high.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 13:2, 5-18; Matthew 7:6, 12-14 (372). "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction."

Wednesday, Jun 23, 2021

Let's make the world a better place

Today the United Nations celebrates Public Service Day to honor the public servants who selflessly work to promote the common good. Each of us, however, is called to make the world a better place through service. As Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*: Service means caring "for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people . . . Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness . . . and tries to help them." Whether as emergency responders, sanitation workers, public advocates, teachers, community volunteers, or whatever

your vocation or profession may be, take the opportunity to recognize the humanity of the vulnerable and offer your help.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Matthew 7:15-20 (373).

"So by their fruits you will know them."

Thursday, Jun 24, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Catch fire

Although American Catholics in general don't tend to make a fuss over the Nativity of John the Baptist, today's solemnity is one of the church's earliest, and it used to be widely celebrated in Europe with bonfires and outdoor festivities. Some regions still hold celebrations for John, who prepared humanity for the coming of Christ. The bonfires recognize the fire within this zealous, outspoken saint. Do you harbor a fire for Christ? If your passion has ebbed, pray to Saint John the Baptist to intercede that you might reignite your fire for the kingdom of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Day: Isaiah 49:1-6; Acts 13:22-26; Luke 1:57-66, 80 (587). "He asked for a tablet and wrote, 'John is his name.'"

Friday, Jun 25, 2021

Confirm your spiritual identity

Most seventh-graders are thrilled by two things about Confirmation: the possibility of having a tongue of fire hover over their heads and choosing a new name. It's not that anything is necessarily wrong with their given names, but it seems awesome to choose one's very own name. Many spiritual traditions and rites employ the custom of taking a new name, signifying a new moment in our life with God. Though a sacrament and public witness in the church, Confirmation is also a personal confirmation of our own selves as unique and beloved of God. What can you do today to confirm your relationship with God?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22; Matthew 8:1-4 (375). "Do not call her Sarai; her name shall be Sarah. I will bless her."

Saturday, Jun 26, 2021

We are worthy of healing

In these divisive times, it is heartening to have examples of the healing power of a word. The gospels tell the story of a centurion, a powerful military leader of the Roman army that occupied Jewish lands, who had such great faith in Jesus that he only needed Jesus to speak a healing word. No ordinary centurion, this fellow had been a great friend of the Jewish people of Capernaum, even building their synagogue. Where are such examples today? Speak a word of healing across all that seems to divide: across the aisle, the religions, the races and ethnicities, the neighborhoods, languages, genders, and sexualities that distinguish us but do not have to divide us. Only say the word and healing shall begin.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 18:1-15; Matthew 8:5-17 (376). "Only say the word and my servant will be healed."

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



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