

Sunday, Aug 22, 2021

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Who do you serve?

Songwriter Bob Dylan had a come-to-Jesus moment in 1978 in a hotel room in Tucson, Arizona. More accurately, it seemed like Jesus came to him, as he felt “a presence in the room that couldn’t have been anybody but Jesus.” For four years, Dylan wrote songs critics panned as “God-awful gospel,” and fans mourned the loss of what they’d come to expect from him. By 1981, Dylan had returned to his Jewish and folk-rock roots. Yet he never retracted his vision: “Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord, but you gotta serve somebody.” The choice remains ours.

TODAY’S READINGS: Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Ephesians 5:21-32; John 6:60-69 (122). “If it does not please you to serve the LORD, decide today whom you will serve.”

Monday, Aug 23, 2021

MEMORIAL OF ROSE OF LIMA, VIRGIN

Family finesse

Parents have expectations of their kids, and kids want to make their own choices—it’s part of the painful growing-up process. Rose of Lima was like a lot of teenagers who clashed with her parents about her future, and she was like a lot of saints who rankled family by refusing to marry. They never let her join a convent, but they didn’t force her to wed either, finally relenting to her choice of chastity. She lived out her brief life as she had wished, in prayer and penance. She is the patron saint of family problems. Everyone has them, so ask Rose for help.

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10; Matthew 23:13-22 (425). “One who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God.”

Tuesday, Aug 24, 2021

FEAST OF BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Play a stirring role

Bartholomew, also called Nathanael, was one of the original 12 apostles and later, a traveling missionary. He embodied what it means to become a missionary disciple—one who, upon being led to Jesus, wishes to lead others to him, too. As the U.S. bishops say in *Go and Make Disciples*, Jesus “gave the Church the unending task of evangelizing as a restless power, to stir and to stimulate.” Where can you stir interest in Jesus today?

TODAY’S READINGS: Revelation 21:9b-14; John 1:45-51 (629). “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

Wednesday, Aug 25, 2021

The past is present

Today, we are becoming aware of the deep truth that wrongs committed in the past, even generations ago, can still perpetuate evil. Such is the sin of racism, which the U.S. Catholic Bishops have repeatedly called “an evil which endures in our society and in our Church” (*Brothers and Sisters to Us*). Each of us is called to help dismantle racism, to reject profiting from the oppression of others, and to listen to the voices of those who have been silenced too long—for the sake of our past, present, and future.

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13; Matthew 23:27-32 (427). “You are like whitewashed tombs.”

Thursday, Aug 26, 2021

Be alert!

Wakefulness is a term often used in spiritual writing. In today’s gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, “Stay awake! You do not know on which day your Lord will come.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains at least 20 references to being awake, usually in regard to “awakening faith.” The church wants its members to be vigilant and tells us in the catechism that the “Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch!” Ask the Holy Spirit to help you awaken to God’s presence today.

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 3:7-13; Matthew 24:42-51 (428). “Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Stay awake!’”

Friday, Aug 27, 2021

MEMORIAL OF MONICA

Hang in there

Sometimes it feels like all of our small choices and actions will never amount to anything. Go big or go home, we’re told. Yet the stuff of transformation, healing, and love is knitted together one small thing at a time. Our call is to have faith and persist. Take a look at Saint Monica, a laywoman from North Africa, who day in and day out offered “small” acts of kindness, love, and care for her beloved yet wayward son Augustine. She never tired of believing in him, even storming heaven on his behalf. Persisting in the small things that are good, beautiful, and true can make a big difference. What small things are you called to persist in?

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Matthew 25:1-13 (429). “Stay awake.”

Saturday, Aug 28, 2021

MEMORIAL OF AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Let happiness be your song

Like all larger-than-life historical figures, Saint Augustine and his legacy are subject to debate. Some find in his vast work reason to take a pessimistic view of humanity. But he was quite life-affirming in his conviction that the happiness found in following God is indeed the only worthy and lasting happiness. “Happy is [the one] who has God,” he succinctly put it. To “have” God for Augustine meant to love God, citing Psalm 72: “For me it is good to cling to God.” Or, as Pharrell Williams put it in his blockbuster song “Happy” a few years back, “Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth.”

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-11; Matthew 25:14-30 (430). “You yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.”

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



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