

Sunday, Jan 27, 2019

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Crack open a Good Book

As recently as a generation ago, faithful Catholics cheerfully assigned Bible-quoting to the category of “Protestant” behaviors. We have sacraments, they “only” have scripture—or so the defense was typically mounted. In truth, our liturgy is one of word *and* sacrament, and the wealth of Catholic tradition is known by those who fully claim both. When Jesus was handed the scroll of Isaiah, he quickly located the passage that would introduce his message. Are you as comfortable finding your way around the Good Book?

TODAY'S READINGS: Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21 (69). “[Jesus] unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.’”

Monday, Jan 28, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THOMAS AQUINAS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Poetry that is simply divine

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), an Italian Dominican priest, was a quiet and brilliant philosopher whose writings have formed and informed generations of theologians and pastors. However, it is Thomas’ poetry that has expressed Catholic belief for many Catholics through the ages. Thomas composed the words to the hymn “Pange Lingua” (and its final two verses, “Tantum Ergo”) for the Feast of Corpus Christi. “*Tantum ergo, sacramentum . . . : Come adore this wondrous presence; bow to Christ, the source of grace.*” This “sacrament most holy” ties us to the past, nourishes us today, and gives us hope for what is to come.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 9:15, 24-28; Mark 3:22-30 (317). “*Christ is mediator of new covenant . . . those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.*”

Tuesday, Jan 29, 2019

Was Jesus a family man?

Those who espouse “family values” might squirm a bit at the passages in the gospel where Jesus seems to be showing a bit of disrespect to his own family. Jesus is teaching us here that our loyalties and obligations go beyond our families of origin. As Christians, we belong to a larger family with larger responsibilities—to listen to the words of Jesus and to seek the will of God. Jesus redefines family, not with the intention of excluding anyone, but rather to invite everyone to join a greater family with a greater vision of family values.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 10:1-10; Mark 3:31-35 (318). “*Jesus said, ‘Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.’*”

Wednesday, Jan 30, 2019

Bless my soil

You can’t always take parables in the gospels on face value, which is why it helps to have a good study Bible or scripture commentary at hand when you break open the word. But every now and then the gospel writers have Jesus explain exactly what he meant. Such is the case with the parable of the seeds and the soil. What to make of the birds eating some seeds while others wither or were choked by weeds? Easy: The seed is the word of God. Some are denied the word. Others show initial enthusiasm

but go on to something else after a time. Others turn away when trouble strikes or allow worldly concerns to distract them. But where is the rich soil found? In the ones who hear the word and accept it and try to live it. Where does the seed of God’s word fall in your life?

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 10:11-18; Mark 4:1-20 (319). “*And these are the ones sown on the good soil: They hear the word and accept it and bear fruit.*”

Thursday, Jan 31, 2019

MEMORIAL OF JOHN BOSCO, PRIEST, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

Love and support your local child

Saint John Bosco was born in Italy in 1815 into a family of farm workers. He became a priest and a teacher, devoting his life to the care and education of abandoned and neglected children. His approach was considered novel at the time: He used love instead of punishment to shape the behavior of his students. John embraced the spirituality of Saint Francis de Sales and dedicated his work to him when he founded the Society of St. Francis de Sales (also known as the Salesians of Don Bosco). How can you support teachers and those who care for children? What are some ways you, in the spirit of John Bosco, can extend love and compassion to children, especially those most in need?

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 10:19-25; Mark 4:21-25 (320). “*There is nothing hidden except to be made visible; nothing is secret except to come to light.*”

Friday, Feb 01, 2019

Whose stuff is this?

Christians commonly suffered the confiscation of their property during the persecutions of the early church, and church property has been confiscated by hostile governments ever since. Perhaps that is why the Catholic Church defends the right to private property. Yet the church also says that this right is not absolute; it is limited by the concept of the “social mortgage,” our mutual obligations to one another and to a just distribution of wealth. You can read about church teaching on property and other social issues in the first “social encyclical,” *Rerum novarum* (“On the Condition of Labor”), written by Pope Leo XIII and issued in 1891. Take a look at it on the Vatican website.

TODAY'S READINGS: Hebrews 10:32-39; Mark 4:26-34 (321). “*You cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting.*”

Saturday, Feb 02, 2019

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Your loving kindness shall not be in vain

There is a lot going on for our prayerful consideration today. It is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the ancient story of faithful parents presenting their baby at the Temple. It is also a day of prayer for men and women who have consecrated their lives with vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity in service to the church. And it was on February 2, 1945 that the Nazis hung the Jesuit priest, Alfred Delp. Delp’s final message to friends was this: “If through one man’s life there is a little more love and kindness . . . then he will not have lived in vain.” Parents, vowed religious, and every one of us can do our best to not live in vain.

TODAY'S READINGS: Malachi 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40 (524). “*Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace.*”

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



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