

Sunday, Feb 03, 2019

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Take the leap of truth

In one guidebook, the place was oddly listed as the “Mount of Hurling.” While that sounds like a site for over eager partygoers, Mount Precipice, as it’s more widely known, is a hill overlooking Nazareth where Jesus almost met an early end. Citizens of his hometown loved having a celebrity to claim as their own, but when Jesus suggested that God might claim foreigners ahead of Israelites because of their welcome to prophets, the Nazoreans proved his point by attempting to run him off a cliff. Telling the truth rarely makes us popular. It can even be dangerous. Take the plunge!

TODAY’S READINGS: Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13; Luke 4:21-30 (72). *“They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill . . . to hurl him down headlong.”*

Monday, Feb 04, 2019

Reach out for assistance

The expression “inner demons” captures something of the helplessness that those in the grip of negative behaviors feel. The ancients took that phrase literally, believing that illness was due to divine punishment for sin or demons taking up temporary residence in a person. The remedy was to seek forgiveness or a healer who could rid you of the bad spirits. While most people nowadays don’t believe that sicknesses and personality problems come from evil spirits or God’s wrath, there is still the need for reaching out to others for help when you cannot help yourself. Medical and other professionals, counselors, family, friends, and especially Jesus the Healer in prayer provide that assistance.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 11:32-40; Mark 5:1-20 (323). *“Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you.”*

Tuesday, Feb 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF AGATHA, VIRGIN, MARTYR

Torture is intolerable

The details of Saint Agatha’s life are not for the faint of heart. Born in Sicily during the third-century Christian persecutions, Agatha was continuously harassed and abused for her religious convictions. She was imprisoned in a brothel, but when she refused to serve customers, she was sent to jail, where she was repeatedly beaten and mutilated. She finally succumbed to death. Not surprisingly Agatha is the patron of torture victims. The church condemns torture as contrary to the Christian tenets of respect for life and human dignity. In honor of Saint Agatha and the countless victims of torture through the centuries, take time today to review the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops’ online instruction: “Torture Is a Moral Issue: A Catholic Study Guide.”

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 12:1-4; Mark 5:21-43 (324). *“Jesus said to the hemorrhaging woman, ‘Daughter, your faith has saved you.’”*

Wednesday, Feb 06, 2019

MEMORIAL OF PAUL MIKI AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Citizens of two worlds

Imagine the trouble 16th-century missionaries had presenting Western Christianity to the Far East. Paul Miki was a Christian from Kyoto, Japan. He understood local religion and culture well enough to argue for Christianity to the point where he made

enemies. Religious and political leaders ran the missionaries out and burned down churches. Miki and his friends stayed and were put to death in 1597. His final Christian witness was to forgive his executioners before he died. Today we can consider ourselves Christian missionaries even in this culture, living our faith in a sometimes hostile environment.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15; Mark 6:1-6 (325). *“He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts.”*

Thursday, Feb 07, 2019

All will be provided

Can you imagine starting out on a work trip and your boss insists that you must leave your money and food at home? But the message of today’s gospel is that just as Jesus was sent by the Father to preach the Good News, so he sent his disciples (and eventually that means us) to continue this mission. The clothes the disciples wore and the food they ate were not to be a source of worry. What mattered was trust that God would give them what they needed to preach repentance and minister to the sick.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24; Mark 6:7-13 (326). *“He instructed them to take nothing for the journey.”*

Friday, Feb 08, 2019

MEMORIAL OF JOSEPHINE BAKHITA, VIRGIN

Stop the traffic

Bakhita: “Fortunate One.” A slave owner gave this ironic name to a young girl kidnapped in Sudan in the 1800s. She was bought and sold many times. It was said that she forgot her birth name because of the great suffering she endured. Eventually she was transported to Italy and there gained her freedom. She joined the Canossian Sisters and was revered for her deep faith in God. Her name, once a symbol of oppression, became a symbol of hope. With Saint Josephine Bakhita, pray for freedom for the many people oppressed by human trafficking in the world today.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 13:1-8; Mark 6:14-29 (327). *“Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody.”*

Saturday, Feb 09, 2019

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Give yourself a break

Are you overwhelmed with things to do and deadlines to meet? Do you need a break? When *did* you last take time to “rest” and to “be refreshed”? Though we sometimes ignore it, faith binds us to the practice of taking a break to ensure the “proper relaxation of mind and body,” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2193) puts it. God rested while immersed in the work of creation. Jesus and the disciples took time to get away. Mary reflected in her heart. Find a way to take your own spiritual snow day: Do your best to find a way to allow everyday work to come to a halt and seek a bit of a respite.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Mark 6:30-34 (328). *“Come away . . . to a deserted place and rest awhile.”*

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



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