

Sunday, Sep 03, 2017

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The high cost of love

It must have stung Peter to have Jesus call him *Satan*, especially because Jesus had already chosen him to be the foundation rock of his community of believers. Peter, in his bullheadedness, seems a good stand-in for many of us, taking the heat for what we ourselves might have done or said (“What’s in it for us, Lord?”). Here he is merely expressing his care for Jesus by saying, as any of us would to someone we love, “God forbid that any tragedy should fall upon you.” Yet Jesus reprimands him because Peter cannot see beyond his desire to protect his Lord (and perhaps himself) from the terrible fate Jesus foresees. Peter does not yet see how great a cost a “wondrous love” will pay to accomplish good. Remember, by God’s standard no price is too high.

TODAY’S READINGS: Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27 (124). “*Get behind me, Satan! You are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.*”

Monday, Sep 04, 2017

MASS FOR LABOR DAY

Work with God

Our work—whether paid or volunteer, inside or outside the home, part-time or full-time, a career or a job—is sacred and worthy of attention and respect. How we labor every day matters, and how we are treated and treat others in our work is an essential concern of Christians. Your daily toil should be life-giving, not stultifying for yourself and others. Don’t lose the spirit of God’s justice and mercy in your work as the Pharisees did. Remember Saint Paul’s advice as you labor each day: “Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 4:16-30 (431). “*Is he not the carpenter's son?*”

Tuesday, Sep 05, 2017

The power within

Pity the poor substitute teacher who feels insecure. When a nervous sub enters a classroom the students will sense it, and chaos is likely to break out. On the other hand, pity the students when a teacher is authoritarian, lording it over them just because he or she can. What students are looking for is someone with true authority, whose authority comes from an inner certainty rather than a need to look good. If you have that kind of authority you can be 4 feet 11 inches, and big, burly football players will pay attention. Jesus spoke with that kind of authority, and even the demons within obeyed. That kind of authority flows from the inner security that comes from prayer and union with God.

TODAY’S READINGS: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11; Luke 4:31-37 (432). “*With authority he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!*”

Wednesday, Sep 06, 2017

Decipher the holiness code

The presence of holiness seems obvious to demons—they knew Jesus on sight. But the rest of us have a hard time recognizing the holiness all around us. Like Bill Murray’s character in *Ghostbusters*, we seem to have trouble with the “good-bad thing.” That makes for dangerous living, at least spiritually speaking. Consider where you encounter holiness in your daily

life. If you don’t feel you do very often, you may be in need of help. Who you gonna call? Try Jesus.

TODAY’S READINGS: Colossians 1:1-8; Luke 4:38-44 (433). “*Demons came out of many, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’*”

Thursday, Sep 07, 2017

Champion freedom of worship

The symbol of the fish has a rich history in Christian tradition. The letters of the Greek word for fish (ICTYS, pronounced ich-thoos) contain the first letters of the following phrase in Greek: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. During periods of persecution in the early church, Christians marked their secret meeting places and tombs with the symbol. Living out one’s beliefs, especially minority beliefs, can still bring persecution in many parts of the world. Stand for freedom of worship around the world.

TODAY’S READINGS: Colossians 1:9-14; Luke 5:1-11 (434). “*They caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.*”

Friday, Sep 08, 2017

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The least of these

Only the “birthdays” of Jesus at Christmas, John the Baptist in June, and the Blessed Virgin Mary today get a special day in the church year, so when a “nativity” comes up, it’s something to notice. Mary’s birth is the dawn of our salvation. And that salvation comes through humble vessels like Mary, who in her Magnificat praises God, “For he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.” Or like Jesus, born in the town of Bethlehem, of which the prophet Micah said, “You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel.” Mary shows us how to become “more” by becoming “less.”

TODAY’S READINGS: Micah 5:1-4a or Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23 (636). “*All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet.*”

Saturday, Sep 09, 2017

MEMORIAL OF PETER CLAVER, PRIEST

Stop traffic

Peter Claver (1581-1654) is called the “saint of the slaves,” because he cared for the well-being of some 300,000 slaves arriving in Colombia. We can follow his lead. Today, slavery is alive and well in the form of human trafficking, the exploitation of immigrants through fraud, coercion, and violence. It’s a lucrative form of international crime, ruining hundreds of thousands of lives and generating more than \$7 billion annually in the “human cargo” business. Saint Peter Claver can inspire us to take action. Learn more at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ page on migration and refugees.

TODAY’S READINGS: Colossians 1:21-23; Luke 6:1-5 (436). “*Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!*”

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



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