



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2015

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Bless man's best friend

On this day, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron of animals, many parishes celebrate the Blessing of the Animals, a special ceremony for beloved pets. In Saint Francis' Canticle of the Creatures, an ode to God's creation, he called animals his brothers and sisters. From the Book of Genesis to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says God surrounds animals with providential care, tradition prescribes that you give back to pets all the love they give to you. One way to care for animals in the wild is to care for their habitat. Be a good steward.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 2:18-24; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16 (140)*. "The LORD God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air."

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

Watching out for the neighbors

"We Christians are called to go out of ourselves to bring the mercy and tenderness of God to all." These words from @Pontifex (the pope's Twitter account) remind us that faith has a claim on our actions. Pope Francis continually urges us to look to the needs of our neighbors, whether they live right next door or halfway around the world. As you go about your day—at home, at school or work, in your timelines or newsfeeds—be watchful for the needs of others. How might you express the compassion of God to all you encounter today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jonah 1:1-2:1-2, 11; Luke 10:25-37 (461)*. "And who is my neighbor?"

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6 FEAST OF BRUNO, PRIEST

Find your balance

Saint Bruno was the founder of the Carthusians, a 900-year-old order of contemplatives, often known for the austerity of their lives. Yet the heart of their vocation is not austerity, but contemplation, a way of prayer available not only to monks or nuns, but ordinary Christians. Take up a book by Father Basil Pennington or Thomas Keating and discover a simple and profound way to balance your hectic way of life with sitting at the Lord's feet, loving and being loved. Or go to Chartreux.org to hear from Carthusians themselves.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 10:38-42 (462)*. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing."

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Dwell with the rosary

"For Daniel and Mary O'Malley / after supper came the beads. / He would Hail Mary the first part: / she would Holy Mary him back / and the rote prayer rose to chant, / word ran upon word, a marriage sound, / the Catholic trick for ecstasy." The poet John Shea calls the rosary the "Catholic trick for ecstasy," perhaps partly because it launches us into a timeless place, lifts us out of our ordinary concerns and into the presence of God. With minds and lips occupied, the heart is free to dwell on Jesus' life, death, and glory. Say the rosary today and tap into eternity.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jonah 4:1-11; Luke 11:1-4 (463)*. "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

Take heart!

"Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are anger and courage. Anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain as they are," Saint Augustine once wrote. Living a life of faith requires courage. That can be a scary as well as invigorating reality. Nothing is static. The world can change just as well as we can. In fact, to change the world we might need to change ourselves. Less gossip and conscious consumption of goods, more time in prayer—these all make more room for courage, which brings hope. And where hope is, God is at work.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Malachi 3:13-20b; Luke 11:5-13 (464)*. "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9 FEAST OF DENIS, BISHOP, AND COMPANIONS

Faith unchained

Among the martyrs, surely no account is as dramatic as that of Saint Denis and his two faithful companions who never left his side. This martyr and patron of France is regarded as the first bishop of Paris. It is said that after Denis was beheaded, he picked up his head and walked six miles, all the while still preaching! Karl Rahner says, "Martyrdom is part of the church's nature since it manifests Christian death in its pure form, as the death of unrestrained faith, which is otherwise hidden in the ambivalence of all human events." Draw on the perseverance of Saint Denis to keep your faith from getting buried in the business of your day.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2; Luke 11:15-26 (465)*. "Whoever is not with me is against me."

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The mystery of illumination

In the play *Godspell*, the disciples pray for the blessing to "See thee more clearly." How can we see Jesus in a clearer light? The Luminous Mysteries offer us five distinct lenses through which to view Jesus: the revelation at his Baptism, the miracle at Cana, the proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration, and the Eucharist. What can we expect from contemplating these events? "Expect a relationship," according to scripture scholar Stephen Binz. We don't read scripture to learn about Jesus. We encounter Jesus. Pray these mysteries and be transformed!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Joel 4:12-21; Luke 11:27-28 (466)*. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."



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

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