

Sunday, Sep 13, 2020

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Share the wealth

Jesus tells the parable of the servant forgiven his large debt who then refuses to forgive a small debt owed him. How could we not forgive others, when God has forgiven us so much? Someone always raises the objection that you can't let someone who kicked you once have another go at it. But that is not what Jesus is asking us to do. He's not asking us to be fools. He's reminding us we're all deep in the red with a debt we can't possibly repay. Be grateful we don't have to.

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 27:30—28:7; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35 (130). *"Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?"*

Monday, Sep 14, 2020

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Cross purposes

It might seem strange to non-believers that the instrument of our savior's torture and execution is the symbol of our faith. But believers know that the cross represents Christ's defeat of death; the symbol is one of triumph. The entrance antiphon for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection: through him we are saved and made free." Reflect on how the crosses you've borne in your own life have also led to freedom.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638). *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."*

Tuesday, Sep 15, 2020

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Pray for us, Mother of God

Yesterday was the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Today, in connection, we remember Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows. Many saints and poets have tried to convey the weight of Mary's pain. But it's Romanos the Melodist who, in the 500s, wrote the "Hymn of Mary at the Cross." In it, Jesus reveals to his mother the redemptive power of his suffering—plus, her role as our intercessor. He says: "Run, Mother, announce to all that 'By suffering he strikes the one who hates Adam, and as victor he is coming.'" How can Our Mother pray for you today?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31a (444); John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (639). *"Behold, your mother."*

Wednesday, Sep 16, 2020

MEMORIAL OF CORNELIUS, POPE, AND CYPRIAN, BISHOP, MARTYRS

Let compassion prevail

The third century was a terrible time of persecution for Christians, some of whom had either to deny their faith or face death. Some rather understandably denied the faith in order to survive, but when persecutions lifted, asked to return. Their desire for reconciliation caused an uproar. Pope Cornelius faced strong challenges because he believed they should be allowed to return after a period of penance. His friend and brother bishop, the learned Cyprian, sided with him in this decision. Their compassionate response prevailed. Both men ended up giving their lives for the faith as Cornelius died in exile in 253 and

Cyprian was martyred under the Emperor Valerian in 258. Follow the lead of these two early Christians and let compassion have the last word.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13; Luke 7:31-35 (445). *"Love does not brood over injury."*

Thursday, Sep 17, 2020

MEMORIAL OF ROBERT BELLARMINI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Live in peace to rest in peace

Today is the Memorial of Saint Robert Bellarmine, a Jesuit theologian and doctor of the church. His scholarly work inserted him into a number of the controversies of his day (late 1500s to early 1600s). One of his many works still in publication is *The Art of Dying Well*, whose advice starts with the concept that dying well (in peace, connected to God) depends on living well. Take a cue from this brilliant saint and contemplate whether you need to make changes to be living well by Christian standards. It's never too late to get right with God.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 7:36-50 (446). *"But he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"*

Friday, Sep 18, 2020

Holy honey!

We don't often think about snacks in the Bible, but surprisingly they're there! While there were likely no cake pops or ice cream in the kitchens of our matriarchs and patriarchs in faith, they still had a sweet tooth—especially for honey! Do an online search of the Bible and read through more than 60 references to honey. Honey has become a symbol of God who can satisfy us with a most pure, joyful sweetness. The Jewish celebration of Rosh Hashana recalls the significance of honey, especially remembering how God cared for the Israelites in the desert by feeding them manna, which tasted like "wafers made with honey." On this first day of Rosh Hashana, let us, with our Jewish friends, wish one another a good, sweet year ahead, trusting in the providence of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 8:1-3 (447). *"Accompanying Jesus were the Twelve and some women . . . and many others who provided for them out of their resources."*

Saturday, Sep 19, 2020

MEMORIAL OF JANUARIUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

Relate to the world's suffering

Reading the gruesome details of tortures like that of fourth-century Januarius, martyred by Emperor Diocletian in 305, may make their suffering seem far removed from our daily experience. But it's not a huge leap to consider more ordinary sufferings today: of the unemployed, the victims of racial hatred, trafficking, disease, or addiction. In the doctrine of the Mystical Body, all suffering is given meaning by Christ's. His Passion means that no one agonizes in vain, that all is redeemed. Consider a gift of financial support to an organization like Catholic Charities, which helps alleviate the suffering of the refugee, the hungry, the trafficked person.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Luke 8:4-15 (448). *"Some fell into good soil and . . . produced a hundredfold."*

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



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