

Sunday, Mar 17, 2019

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Let's stay here!

Sometimes it can be a virtue not to be moved. Martyrs resist the lure of preserving their lives by renouncing their faith, and so go to their deaths. Heroes stare down villains in defense of the weak under their protection. But standing your ground can also be a cover for simple stagnation. Especially when you're actually sitting on the couch and enjoying its satisfying cushions. The spiritual life of saints is kinetic: willing to be transformed in shape, size, and dynamism depending on need and circumstance. Explore the fluidity of the Spirit's motion in your life. Let yourself be moved.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17—4:1 or Philippians 3:20-4:1; Luke 9:28b-36 (27). *"Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."*

Monday, Mar 18, 2019

MEMORIAL OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Mercy me

"Have mercy!" How many times have you heard that expression? Today's gospel goes to the core Christian belief in mercy and forgiveness, concepts so central that Pope Francis declared 2016 a Year of Mercy. Cyril of Jerusalem is known for his insightful religious instruction and for having been immersed in controversies. Three times he was exiled over political and church differences, and three times he was granted mercy and reinstated as Jerusalem's bishop. Who do you know in need of mercy? Take a step to be an agent of mercy today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 9:4b-10; Luke 6:36-38 (230). *"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."*

Tuesday, Mar 19, 2019

SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

Got fava beans?

In some parts of the world, especially in Italy, it is customary to carry blessed fava beans in observance of St. Joseph Day. In New Orleans you might run into a parade. Just about anywhere you'll meet people wearing red. And today is Father's Day in Spain and Portugal, all to honor Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary. Most Catholic churches have a window or statue dedicated to the saint. If you're an old-time Catholic in Poland and your name is Józef, tradition holds that you throw a party for your friends and neighbors. Whatever your name, why not wear red today, put fava beans in your pocket, and maybe throw a party?

TODAY'S READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2:41-51a (543). *"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home."*

Wednesday, Mar 20, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Support your local prophet

The Israelites knew one thing about their prophets: They spoke the true word of God whether the message was welcome or not—and frequently it wasn't, provoking resistance, even to the point of eliminating the prophet to silence the voice they didn't wish to hear. Jesus encountered opposition as well. Plenty of people—especially powerful people—wanted to get him out of the way, but he and his gospel live on. Do you hear prophetic words

spoken today in our world? How are they received? How do you receive them?

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 18:18-20; Matthew 20:17-28 (232). *"It will not mean the loss of instruction from the priests, nor of counsel from the wise, nor of messages from the prophets."*

Thursday, Mar 21, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Tips for growing faith

Trees figure prominently in the Bible and often serve as symbols of our faith. Those who first heard the words of scripture—being people living on the edge of the desert—were quite aware of the special care trees require to grow strong and bear fruit: Droughts and floods, weeds and critters, and even the occasional curse from an angry messiah can kill a tree in short order. Care for your faith as you would a sapling. Weed and water and protect it against the elements. And be mindful of the seeds of faith you plant in others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Luke 16:19-31 (233). *"He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream."*

Friday, Mar 22, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

In praise of water

Today, like every Friday during Lent, Catholics abstain from eating meat in honor of the Passion of Jesus on Good Friday. On this day of abstinence, let's remember a form of sustenance—one that no living thing can survive without—a form of sustenance that's in danger: water. Today is World Water Day, an annual observance of the United Nations used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. God has charged us with stewardship of creation—what can you do to support water conservation today?

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46 (234). *"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."*

Saturday, Mar 23, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

The patron saint of entitlement?

Writers, artists, and poets have tried to capture the overwhelming love of the Prodigal Father waiting in the famous parable for his errant son to return. When he gets a glimpse of him, he abandons all dignity and runs to cover his son with kisses. Less attention is given to the elder son, the obedient, hard-working one who never abandoned his father in the first place. Why is he not the focus of the parable? Perhaps because we find his attitude selfish or entitled? And yet, is not the elder son often the model for many of us? We may strive to do the right thing, but with the expectation that our fidelity entitles us to special treatment. There is another chance for the elder son, though, as later in the story the father goes out to meet him, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (235). *"My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours."*

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



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