

Sunday, Mar 31, 2019

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

It ain't over even when it's over

Some years back we celebrated a Year of Mercy, opening symbolic doors across the Catholic world to convey the idea that prodigals could return at this time, and no hard feelings. Many were amazed, a few dismayed, and others took advantage of the offer and happily returned. Then the Year of Mercy ended. The doors were closed. Some wondered: Are we back now to the Millennium of Judgment? Answer: The door of mercy is always open. Our loving God remains on the lookout, even when we are very far off.

TODAY'S READINGS: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (33). *"While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion."*

Monday, Apr 01, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Yes we can, with God's help

Our faith might be more conditional than we'd like to admit. We may expect it to magically solve all our problems, perhaps by way of miraculous signs and wonders such as the Galileans expected of Jesus. It's understandable, but that is not how faith works. It's not about a miracle fix but rather about facing and resolving life's challenges with the confidence that we do not face them alone—God is at our side. So rather than hope for a miracle today, work on resolving a problem yourself, with the confidence and serenity that God is with you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54 (244). *"The Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast."*

Tuesday, Apr 02, 2019

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS OF PAOLA, HERMIT

One and many

The funny thing about hermits is that they tend to attract a crowd. Born in southern Italy in 1416, Saint Francis of Paola lived as a hermit for five years before gathering some companions with whom he founded an order inspired by his namesake, Saint Francis, called the "Minims"—the "minis," the least. He wasn't the first person whose desire to focus on God attracted people who wanted the same thing. Try to find a balance between solitude and sociability, between encountering God one-on-one and with others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16 (245). Or Philippians 3:8-14; Luke 12:32-34 (546). *"The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well."*

Wednesday, Apr 03, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Glad to be of help

The feeling that you are doing God's will on earth activates a deep source of inner peace. By contrast, the thought that you really should be doing something else creates a low-grade feeling of anxiety that you can ignore for only so long. Eventually the unease accumulates until life becomes a heavy burden, or you get sick—or both. Your fear might be that God wants you to go to some hard place, to do some difficult task. Not so. As theologian Frederick Buechner put it, God calls you to the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. To find that

place of deep gladness you have to go within and you have to listen. Lent is the perfect time to do both.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30 (246). *"I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me."*

Thursday, Apr 04, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Sacred sites

When the church was looking for a patron saint of the internet, it hit upon Isidore. One of the most learned people of his time (the sixth and seventh centuries), Isidore, among his many accomplishments as a church leader, put together a 20-volume encyclopedia covering just about everything from agriculture to grammar. His position at the center of this "web" of knowledge made him the most likely candidate to be patron of the internet. To find saintly patronage for something new, the church looked to someone from a long time past. May Isidore guide you wisely as you explore the web we call the internet.

TODAY'S READINGS: Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47 (247). *"If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me."*

Friday, Apr 05, 2019

MEMORIAL OF VINCENT FERRER, PRIEST; DAY OF ABSTINENCE

People of good faith sometimes disagree

The church has been through some rough stretches over the centuries. One such period occurred during the papal schism in the 1300s when several men claimed to be the true pope at the same time. So complex and divisive were the politics that two holy leaders living in Spain at the same time—Saints Vincent Ferrer and Catherine of Siena—supported opposing claimants to the papacy. Ferrer later said the schism had such a depressing effect as to ruin his health for life. Though at times you must stand on principle, prolonged divisions hurt everyone. In your own family, neighborhood, and church, be a uniter, not a divider.

TODAY'S READINGS: Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30 (248). *"No one laid a hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come."*

Saturday, Apr 06, 2019

LENTEN WEEKDAY

Here's to imperfection

As one would expect, there were some great people in Jesus' ancestral line, including King David. But David wasn't all good—he sent Uriah to his death so he could marry his wife, Bathsheba, whom he had already impregnated. And there are others in Jesus' family tree you might raise an eyebrow at—Rahab and Tamar were labeled as prostitutes. No one's family is perfect, not even Jesus'. So don't expect perfection from your loved ones, and come before Jesus acknowledging your own imperfection as well during this Lenten season.

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53 (249). *"Does not scripture say that the Christ will be of David's family?"*

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



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