



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

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Universal acceptance

Religious traditions have a funny habit of condemning all other traditions. It wasn't that long ago that Catholics consigned all Protestants to hell, and vice versa. Some of us can even remember when it was considered a *sin* for parishioners of the Irish church to go across the street to the Italian church, or the Polish church, or the German church, or whatever the *other* church was. But Jesus taught extraordinary tolerance and acceptance of everyone of good will. We embrace our faith, but not to the rejection of Jews, Muslims, other Christians, or even nonbelievers. We're all in this together.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers 11:25-29; James 5:1-6; Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48*

*"Whoever is not against us is for us."*

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 FEAST OF WENCESLAUS, MARTYR

### A legend in our own time

Legend surrounds the brief life of Saint Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia (907-935), originally venerated because of his martyrdom but most remembered today because of a Christmas carol from the 16th century that celebrated him as a model of generosity. Separating fact from fiction may be difficult after 1,000 years, but your own track record with regard to generosity should be easier to tally. Will anyone sing praises of your generosity a millennium from now? A hundred years? Ten minutes after you are gone? If not, what can you do today to start building your own lasting legacy?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Zechariah 8:1-8; Luke 9:46-50*

*"The least among all of you is the greatest."*

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

FEAST OF MICHAEL, GABRIEL, AND RAPHAEL, ARCHANGELS

### Which side is God on?

The Bible sometimes reads like a chapter from Dungeons and Dragons. In the apocalyptic passages of Daniel and the Book of Revelation we meet serpents, angels, ancient ones, prophets, and warriors. These characters are set against a backdrop of fire, war, struggle, truth, and deceit. Such images paint a picture of a God who shows love by crushing the enemies of God's people. This is a God who takes sides. Such images may shock us because we tend not to associate God's love with violence or conflict. We live in a world that is deeply interconnected, one in which we can see the human suffering on all sides as a result of violent conflict. What images of God are needed today? What image might we have when we consider that God is on everybody's side?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12a; John 1:47-51*

*"War broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon."*

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

FEAST OF JEROME, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Wise talk

A 98-year-old woman recently expressed surprise at the tone of modern public discourse. All the antagonism, accusation, and aggression! "After a century, you learn there are no sides to take," she reflected, "no divisions, no right and wrong people. You just see people. You just hear their fear." Saint Jerome agreed that respecting the humanity of others is key. He noted: "Where there is no honor, there is contempt; where there is contempt, insult is

frequent; where there is insult, there is indignation; where there is indignation, there is no rest." Want peace? Start with respect.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Nehemiah 2:1-8; Luke 9:57-62*

*"Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

FEAST OF THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS, VIRGIN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Walk with me

Today we honor Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, beloved for her "Little Way," which has encouraged countless "ordinary people" doing ordinary things on the road to sanctity. Thérèse lived in a Carmelite convent with her older sister Pauline, who was "like a second mother," Thérèse wrote. Pauline was with Thérèse throughout her brief life, illness, and death at the tender age of 24. It is no accident that Jesus sent out his disciples in pairs. Having a spiritual companion, as Thérèse did, can be of great help and comfort on the sometimes difficult spiritual journey. Cultivate spiritual friendships in your own life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Luke 10:1-12*

*"Other disciples . . . he sent ahead of him in pairs."*

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 FEAST OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

### Saved by an angel

Joan Wester Anderson has been writing about angels since 1989 after her son was mysteriously rescued from a devastating snow storm on Christmas Eve. That experience resulted in her first book of true stories of remarkable encounters with angels, *Where Angels Walk*. Since then she has written many more books on the subject, and all of them offer spine-tingling, inspiring tales of ordinary people who have been rescued, healed, comforted, and sheltered by heavenly visitors. These amazing stories make the case that every one of us has a guardian angel and that we are constantly being guided, guarded, and protected by these messengers from God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Barruch 1:15-22; Matthew 18:1-5, 10*

*"Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven."*

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

### Crossing the bridge

A prayer of Jesus recorded in all three synoptic gospels catches him in a kind of ecstasy, thrilled that the gulf between God and humanity is being bridged, and he is the bridge! Jesus acknowledges that "no one knows the Father but the Son," which is certainly wonderful for Jesus, but if it were left there we'd still be on the outside looking in. Then comes that little word—"and." No one knows God but Jesus himself, "and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him." That's us! Jesus' whole mission was to show us both who God is (loving Parent) and what God is like (full of justice and mercy). Jesus looks at the likes of you and me and says, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see, the ears that hear what you hear." We're blessed indeed when we look to Jesus to show us, again and again, who God really is.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Barruch 4:5-12, 27-29; Luke 10:17-24*

*"All things have been handed over to me by my Father."*

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