



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

Sunday, Dec 03, 2017

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Watch this channel

At a time when people are setting up manger scenes to depict the infant Jesus' birth, it seems strange to look ahead—as this Sunday's gospel does—to the return of a very adult Lord Jesus to gather his people at the end of time. "Keep awake," he told the disciples, "for you do not know when the master of the house will come." While these two pictures look very different, what connects them is *watchfulness*. Advent is the season of our long wait for the coming of Christ at Christmas. And as followers of the risen Lord, we wait for Jesus to come again in the last days. Watch for him; he will come.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (2)*. "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Monday, Dec 04, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DAMASCENE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Imagine if you can

It's hard to get somewhere if you don't know where you're going. That's true not only in travel but in the larger sense of life goals as well. Contemplation of religious images helps us focus on the inward journey toward holiness. Such images can even aid in establishing a relationship with a spiritual guide in the person of the saint. John of Damascus championed the use of images to ignite the religious imagination. This season let's imagine together what a just nation should look like.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175)*. Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith."

Tuesday, Dec 05, 2017

ADVENT WEEKDAY

To know you is to love you

In these times of war, political conflict, and growing poverty, it's hard to imagine a state of affairs in which wisdom and justice reign and everything works together for the good. Yet that's exactly the possibility God has promised and offered from the prophets to Jesus. The more we learn the ways of God—and the more we follow them—the closer we get to that place where all have what they need and act justly toward one another.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176)*. "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord."

Wednesday, Dec 06, 2017

MEMORIAL OF NICHOLAS, BISHOP

A jolly good tradition

Saint Nicholas spoke out against heresies and was imprisoned for a time for his Christian beliefs. His faithfulness is exemplary, but charity remains his signature virtue. What started with Nicholas tossing a few bags of coins into a poor family's yard has been transformed over centuries of retelling, embellishing, grafting, and adapting into the magical tales of Ole Saint Nick (Father Christmas, Santa Claus, Kris Kringle), whose yearly ambition is to deliver gifts to every girl and boy. We may not bring out our best robes and a fatted calf for the annual

return of Santa, but cookies and milk serve nicely to show our gratitude to Saint Nick for inspiring ole souls of every stripe to be more jolly and generous.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37 (177)*.

My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."

Thursday, Dec 07, 2017

MEMORIAL OF AMBROSE, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

God works in strange ways

When a dispute arose about who was to be the new bishop of Milan, Ambrose (c. 339-397) stepped in to try to mediate the dispute. He so impressed those involved that they decided to elect him bishop, even though he was not baptized, much less ordained. So he was baptized and ordained priest and bishop at the same time! Do something today about resolving a major conflict in your life, but be careful—you might be put in charge!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (178)*.

"They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength."

Friday, Dec 08, 2017

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY; PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Rejoice with Mary today

Today we celebrate not only the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but also the anniversary of the declaration of this solemnity and the doctrine behind it. In a sense this day answers a question: How could Jesus, who was human in every way but sin, be born without original sin? Answer: Mary must have been without sin, therefore she was "immaculately conceived." In a larger sense this day encourages us to honor the special holiness and closeness to God of Mary as the woman who brought the Savior into the world. It also declares God's grace and love to be greater than sin's destructive effects. Pray to Mary today and rejoice that we can turn to such a wonderful figure.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689)*. Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Saturday, Dec 09, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN

More than meets the eye

There are many accounts of the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531 to Saint Juan Diego, an indigenous Mexican who had converted to Catholicism after the Spanish conquest. There are also many questions about the historical accuracy of those accounts. But great stories also serve a purpose beyond historical literalism—they speak to our hearts of greater truths that are sometimes best captured in epics. A great mythic story is not necessarily false—it can be true at a deeper, more symbolic, and powerful level than facts alone can approach. Dip into some deeper truth by searching online for good accounts of the Guadalupe story.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180)*. "At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved

with pity for them."

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Sunday, Dec 10, 2017 **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT** **No place is God-forsaken**

Deserts and wildernesses can be beautiful, but they have an element of danger as well. They're good places to get lost, for one thing, and in them you're vulnerable to forces of nature that are vastly more powerful than you. Sometimes, though, you have to travel through the trackless wastes to get where you want to go, and that's true spiritually as well. To reach the Promised Land, the Israelites had to walk through the desert; to return from exile in Babylon they had to journey back to Jerusalem. John the Baptist called people out to the desert to repent. As you continue your Advent journey, remember that sometimes you have to walk through life's deserted stretches to arrive at the place where God is found.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8 (5). "Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!"*

Monday, Dec 11, 2017 **MEMORIAL OF DAMASUS I, POPE** **Good bookkeeping helps**

The pontificate of Damasus (366-384) occurred during a stormy time in the early church, with controversies and divisions on all sides. Perhaps Damasus' greatest contribution was his insight that a standardized version of the Bible was desperately needed to clear the air. In 382 he commissioned a highly respected scholar named Jerome to revise the Bible into a more accurate and updated Latin version, working directly from the original Greek and Hebrew. Saint Jerome's monumental effort came to be known as the *Vulgate*, meaning "translated into a native language." Even though Latin long ago stopped being a language of everyday use, the Vulgate still holds an honored position in the church. Be grateful for the Good Book and open it up today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181). "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"*

Tuesday, Dec 12, 2017 **FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE** **Viva Guadalupe!**

Mexican Catholics have long revered the Virgin of Guadalupe as a symbol of God's compassionate presence among the people. She is also an important symbol of Mexican nationalism. In 1810, when Father Miguel Hidalgo initiated the movement that led to Mexican independence, he and his followers carried a banner of Guadalupe and shouted, "Death to bad government, long live the Virgin of Guadalupe!" Guadalupe was proclaimed "Patroness of the Americas"—including the United States—by Pope Pius XII in 1946. She continues to serve as an apt symbol of loving care for all God's people. Perhaps you can attend a celebration of her feast day today, or find your own personal way to commemorate the feast.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47 (690A). "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*

Wednesday, Dec 13, 2017 **MEMORIAL OF LUCY, VIRGIN, MARTYR** **Shed some light on the season**

Saint Lucy is one of those early saints about whom we know little,

though we have some wonderful legendary stories about her that have to do with her name, which means "light." We remember her because she lived—and died—in a time when Christians, to remain faithful, regularly paid the price of their lives. Today we also cross over the midpoint of the Advent season, when we prepare for the coming of the One who is the way, the truth, and the light. Celebrate this saint of light and clear sight by keeping your inner eye open for the Light of the World.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (183). "Lift up your eyes on high and see."*

Thursday, Dec 14, 2017 **MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH** **A closer walk with thee**

Saint John of the Cross, a Spanish mystic, was born in 1542. He wrote *The Dark Night of the Soul*, which explores the doubt and spiritual dryness all serious Christians experience on their spiritual journey. Though difficult and painful, the dark night of the soul is an invitation to a deeper closeness with God through greater trust and abandonment to God's will. Saint John wrote, "Oh night that guided me, Oh night more lovely than the dawn." During the holiday season it's not unusual for people to experience doubt and emptiness. Pray to Saint John of the Cross to shore up your faith and give you courage on your way toward God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15 (184). "Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist."*

Friday, Dec 15, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **Stay true to the spirit**

Some folks never have a good word for anybody. This was true in the time of Jesus, when people criticized John the Baptist for fasting, and then spoke badly of Jesus for feasting! Then when Jesus performed healing miracles, some thought he acted by the power of the devil. When he refused a miraculous rescue to save himself from the cross, they said God had abandoned him. Don't listen to the critics—follow the Spirit's prompting.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185). "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'"*

Saturday, Dec 16, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **John points the way**

John the Baptist is a prominent personality in Advent. His style is that of the Old Testament prophets, but he points to the New Testament reality of Jesus. He didn't become a follower of Jesus, even though he was the forerunner of the "one who is to come." John's message is delivered in the "fire and brimstone" language of career prophets like Amos or Jeremiah. But his greatest resemblance is to Elijah, whose return was anticipated before the arrival of the messiah. Like John, we, too, "prepare the way" for Jesus to come into the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186). "Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him."*

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Sunday, Dec 17, 2017 **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, GAUDETE SUNDAY** **Enjoy!**

Do Christians have an obligation to be happy? That sounds wrong, of course—none of us can program our feelings, and there are legitimate reasons why we're not happy all the time. On "Rejoice" Sunday, which is what the Latin *Gaudete* means, we are reminded that we share the vocation of John the Baptist to testify to the light of Christ. The reality of Christ in our midst is the joy to which our lives ultimately give witness. This joy isn't a jump-up-and-down emotion but a fruit of the Holy Spirit that fuels our courage in every situation and decision.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (8)*. "John came as witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."

Monday, Dec 18, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **The Lord be with you**

Life can seem chaotic. This is true in the mad rush to Christmas, but also in the everyday challenges that make us wonder if life makes sense. In response to this human need for order and meaning we pray that the Lord, the one who holds all things together, will be with us: "O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free." Be mindful throughout your day that the Lord is with you in all that you do.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194)*. "They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'"

Tuesday, Dec 19, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **God is full of surprises**

Any child will tell you that part of the magic as Christmas approaches is anticipating the surprise that will come from opening a wrapped gift or digging into a stocking and finding what is hidden inside. Mary's cousin Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, must have felt an enormous wave of surprise when she discovered "what was hidden inside"—that she was pregnant at an advanced age. Surprise was followed by gratitude for the gift that had been given to her. We might pause for a moment today to unwrap the many surprising gifts with which God already has graced our lives.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25 (195)*. "This is what the Lord has done for me."

Wednesday, Dec 20, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **Find your calling joyfully**

Many people believe God has a special plan just for them—if only they could figure out what it is! From this point of view, discovering what God wants for a person is like a search for a missing key: Find it, and you can get in; don't, and you're locked out. Discerning what

God may be calling you to, though, may be as simple as seeing where—in the words of campus minister Sally Willitzer in the 2011 issue of *VISION Vocation Guide*—you "can best be an instrument of love in the world," and that means not only discovering where you can most effectively help others but also what makes you happy.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38 (196)*. "Do not be afraid . . . for you have found favor with God."

Thursday, Dec 21, 2017 **MEMORIAL OF PETER CANISIUS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH** **Light that candle**

Here's a quote suitable to toast the winter solstice, the waning year's longest night: "Let the world indulge its madness. Let it wear itself out, for it cannot endure and passes like a shadow. But we, buried deep in the wounds of Christ, why should we be dismayed?" This comes to us courtesy of Peter Canisius (1521-97), Jesuit theologian and defender of the church during the Protestant Reformation. Often we cannot ignore the world's madness and must vigorously oppose it. But sometimes our candle lit against the darkness is all the opposition that's required.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45 (197)*. "The Lord, your God, is in your midst."

Friday, Dec 22, 2017 **ADVENT WEEKDAY** **Try a little kindness**

If we focus only on our own well-being and interests, we are likely to end up with a head full of confused and scattered thoughts. There is a remedy, however, to the trap of becoming self-absorbed. This is the time of year to get outside of our own circular thoughts and extend a hand to another. An act of charity or kindness, no matter how minor it may appear to be, is likely to warm our hearts and melt away our troubled thoughts.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56 (198)*. "He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts."

Saturday, Dec 23, 2017 **MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF KANTY, PRIEST** **Greater love would be hard to find**

If John of Kanty in 15th-century Poland could have known he would one day be venerated as a saint, he would have been astonished. Although he was a brilliant scripture scholar, he was also a humble parish priest. Even when treated unfairly for years, he could accept unjust blame and criticism without flinching because he believed that he could protect his parishioners and defeat the power of evil by absorbing it into himself. In a culture of blame like our own, the ability to defuse violence and anger is a rare gift but one we should cultivate instead of seeking revenge or proving ourselves right when wronged.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66 (199)*. "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me."



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Sunday, Dec 24, 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS EVE

You made it!

Thank God, it's over! That's the secret Christmas Eve prayer of many exhausted Christians who can't drag themselves to another store or holiday party. No need to feel ashamed. We should all thank God that Advent has come to an end. The wait is over. Our salvation is at hand. The Lord has kept his promise. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel/ He has come to His people and set them free," sings Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, in his beautiful song of thanksgiving that we call the Benedictus ("Blessed be"). Today we share in Zechariah's joyful hope for the coming of God's peace (and quiet).

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 (11).* "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."

Monday, Dec 25, 2017

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

Word is spreading!

Words are powerful things. They encourage love, underscore hate, and kindle fear. Words create reality because what we speak does take on flesh and live with us. Have you not wished for the chance to say what was left unsaid, in a moment that is gone forever? When God spoke a word into being in Genesis, the whole world resulted. Later, God spoke Divinity into Mary's body and the world was saved from itself. This Christmas, give voice to your heart and say what needs to be said to those you love.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 (13); Night: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (14); Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20 (15); Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 (16).* "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory."

Tuesday, Dec 26, 2017

FEAST OF STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Follow Stephen's lead

Some things, we feel sure, are impossible to forgive. But then we reluctantly recall that Jesus forgave his crucifiers, and Stephen, the first martyr of the church, forgave his murders in faithful imitation of his Lord. Believe it or not, today Stephen (d. 35) is known as the patron saint of masons and bricklayers—a strange role for a man who was stoned to death! Yet, why not? We are all pledged to bless those who curse us. What better way to do that than to take up the cause of your old enemy? Pray for your persecutors today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22 (696).* "You will be dragged before governors and kings because of me."

Wednesday, Dec 27, 2017

FEAST OF JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Time to see the light

Today is a day to celebrate the unique perspective on Jesus the writings of John have to offer. In particular, light and darkness. John sees Jesus as the light of the world, and so it is customary to light candles on this day. As the evening falls today, light a candle and say a favorite prayer in honor of the One who said, "I have come as light into the world" (John 12:46).

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a, 2-8 (697).* "The life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it."

Thursday, Dec 28, 2017

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

Stand up for the least of these

No sooner do we celebrate the birth of one baby when the Bible recalls the slaughter of other babies. Like the infant Moses before him, the Messiah escapes to Egypt with his family. Let's not look the other way as this reading comes up each year, but let it be a reminder: Children still are victimized by adults who abuse their power—personally, professionally, or politically. Let's change that. What can you do today to be an advocate for children? Check out .org for some ideas.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 1:5—2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 (698).* "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt."

Friday, Dec 29, 2017

MEMORIAL OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR

Get your priorities straight

In the 12th century, Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, stood firm against King Henry II in the latter's efforts to establish himself as absolute ruler over everything in his kingdom, including the church. Becket's refusal to submit to the king's ultimate authority cost him his life. The stakes are not always that high in the tensions between church and state, but people of faith must prepare themselves for difficult choices. Be clear about which of your loyalties are temporal—finite and fleeting—and which are eternal—everlasting and true for all time.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202).* "This child is destined to be a sign that will be opposed so the inner thoughts of many will be revealed."

Saturday, Dec 30, 2017

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

We all have a role to play

Anna is one of nine female prophets noted in the Bible. She was also a widow who spent most of her life in the work of worship and proclamation at the temple. This was unusual, because in Hebrew tradition, widows were more often looked upon as problems: Who would marry them, support their children, and feed them? In the early church, the fortunes of widows were reversed. The holy office of widows became an honored station in life. Those formally consecrated as widows became ministers of charity, freed from accountability to men as they used their own wealth, traveled, and played a vital public role in the community. How might your station in life be "consecrated"?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 (203).* "There was also a prophet, Anna, who never left the temple."

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Sunday, Dec 31, 2017

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

Endings and beginnings

The generations need each other. Young people seek heroes to look up to and aspire toward. Older folk need the fresh eye, courage, and idealism of newcomers at the table of decision-making. When we work together across generations, we take our surest steps into a future of hope. Elders like Simeon and Anna still haunt sacred places, waiting on God to fulfill old promises. Young families continue to present themselves, bearing their joys and uncertainties. This happy intersection is both consolation and challenge. Let's find out together what it means to be church!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Colossians 3:12-21 or Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40 (17). "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace . . . for my eyes have seen your salvation."*

Monday, Jan 01, 2018

OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Share the true gift of the season

Christianity is not a new philosophy or new morality, says Pope Benedict XVI. It is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ: "We ourselves must be personally involved in an intimate and profound relationship with Jesus." Mary, the Mother of God, whom we honor today, was instrumental in bringing the person of Jesus to us and showing us how to fully embrace a life in Christ. Resolve to deepen your relationship with Jesus and, like Mary, find ways to bring Christ to others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). "He was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb."*

Tuesday, Jan 02, 2018

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZUS, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

Faith begins at home

Several giants of the early church, including today's Saints Basil and Gregory Nazianzus, were inspired by Basil's older sister Macrina (whose brothers also included two other saints, Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste). Macrina deeply influenced her family with her asceticism. With the help of her younger brother, Peter, Macrina turned the family estate into a monastery and convent, providing a peaceful shelter for study and meditation. What inspiration can you draw from family members as you resolve to deepen your commitment to Christ in this New Year?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"*

Wednesday, Jan 03, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

Dig a little deeper

As Christians, we believe we are called by name to follow Jesus. Do we accept what that belief implies: that Jesus knows us personally and considers us to be an essential part of his ministry? And as we call on Jesus, just how confident are we that we know who he is and what he wants out of the relationship? John the Baptist knew who Jesus was, but such knowledge took rigorous prayer and questioning. Perhaps you need to do the same to discover why Jesus counts you among his friends.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 2:29—3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). "And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

Thursday, Jan 04, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS

Work with what you have

And you thought you were busy? Consider Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native-born citizen of the United States to be canonized. Mother Seton founded the first American religious community for women, the Sisters of Charity. She opened the first American parish school, nursed sick and dying family, friends, and neighbors, and established the first American Catholic orphanage—all while raising five children as a widow! Next time your own responsibilities get you down, remember that you don't have to start out a saint to do some good in the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42 (207). "Let no one deceive you. The person who acts in righteousness is righteous."*

Friday, Jan 05, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP

Stick it out for the long haul

Ever feel like you don't really belong—not even in the church? John Neumann (1811-60) must have had days like that. Born in Bohemia, his bishop didn't ordain him after seminary because the Hapsburg Empire had too many priests. So he came to America and was ordained within a month but always felt like an outsider. Later, when he was installed as bishop of Philadelphia, not one bishop showed up to support him. Stick around the church long enough, and you will be rewarded for hanging in there.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 3:11-21; John 1:43-51 (208). "Nathanael said to Philip, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip replied, 'Come and see.'"*

Saturday, Jan 06, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS

Do the ordinary with extraordinary faith

When Brother André tried to enter his religious community, his superiors thought him too sickly and undereducated to amount to much. So they made him the community doorman. In addition to answering the door, he directed visitors, delivered packages and mail, awakened the community, ran errands, cut hair, sewed, fixed things, maintained the wine cellar, swept up, and—yes—he also did windows. When he died after decades of counseling and bringing God's healing to hundreds of thousands of people, a million mourners attended his funeral. Quite a switch for a person who didn't show much "promise." We recognize God's presence when we do our everyday tasks with generosity, love, and devotion.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 5:5-13; Mark 1:7-11 or Luke 23-38 (209). "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me."*

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