

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Forgive, for goodness sake!

We are told in today's reading that the unforgiving servant will be "tortured" for failing to forgive another, after having been forgiven himself. Because a parable is a symbolic way of talking about a profound truth, we can take the word *tortured* metaphorically and ask, "In what way are we 'tortured' when we fail to forgive?" Failing to forgive leaves us hostage to our hurt. Unable to move on, we are captive to our own resentment. Unwilling to accept the imperfections of others, we can become judgmental. The end result of the failure to forgive is bitterness—a painful, torturous emotional state. When Jesus tells us to forgive, "not seven times, but 77 times," it is for our own well-being. Forgive someone today!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 27:30—28:7; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35 (130). "How often should I forgive?"*



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

Do I hear an amen?

Like the centurion who came to Jesus for a healing, we're aware that we fall short of having "earned" the great gift of the presence of Jesus "under our roof" or in our lives. But Jesus chooses to dwell with us, imperfect as we are. As Pope Francis says in *Misericordiae Vultus*, our salvation depends on mercy. Mercy is the "ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us." Mercy is the "bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness." A daily awareness of our own "unearned rewards" helps us to share our spiritual wealth with others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 7:1-10 (443). "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

MEMORIAL OF JANUARIUS, BISHOP, MARTYR

Faith will see us through

The stories of early Christian saints are often larger-than-life. So it is with Saint Januarius (third century). According to legend, Januarius was thrown into a fiery furnace by the Romans during a time of intolerance toward Christians. To everyone's amazement he emerged unscathed. Taken figuratively, the story says a lot about how faith can help us in the face of intolerance when it comes to things like race, gender, immigration status, and so on. We may be subject to the fiery furnace of prejudice, but our faith can save us. It can remind us that we are all the beloved of God and it can move us to action for a more just world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Timothy 3:1-13; Luke 7:11-17 (444). "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them."*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

MEMORIAL OF ANDREW KIM TAE-GÖN, PRIEST, AND PAUL CHÖNG HA-SANG, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Stretch your faith

Being an example of faith to others means extending the branches of your life outward. Extend a branch a little farther today and say a silent prayer for someone in your life who is struggling. The martyrs Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gön, Paul Chöng Ha-sang, and their companions were part of a church in Korea that began entirely with laypeople. In difficult times of persecution they were buoyed by others in their faith. Do not doubt the power of a lived faith that extends beyond your arms and into others' hearts.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Timothy 3:14-16; Luke 7:31-35 (445). "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

FEAST OF MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Take your seat at the table

The names of the apostles are integral to our story of faith, but in truth, we know very little about many of them. Bits of information from the gospels and Acts of the Apostles do allow a glimpse of their lives in the first Christian community. The rest we can only prayerfully imagine. We know that Matthew collected from his Jewish kin the hated Roman tax and that he associated with other tax collectors and "sinners." What we can prayerfully imagine is Jesus sharing a meal with them, and then we might wonder if we would have joined them at table.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13 (643). "I have come to call not the self-righteous."*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

Women belong in the picture

Women, as today's gospel makes clear, accompanied Jesus in his ministry. They left their families to follow him and offered financial support for his mission. They stood by him at the cross, and all four gospels place women at the tomb when the resurrected Christ is revealed. As scripture scholar Elizabeth Johnson points out in her groundbreaking book *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*, "Jesus Christ included women in his community, not as subordinates to males, but as equal sisters to their brothers." Many of us, men and women alike, still struggle with seeing women in their fundamental humanity as equals to men. Think about the ways you overlook women when it comes to spiritual leadership.

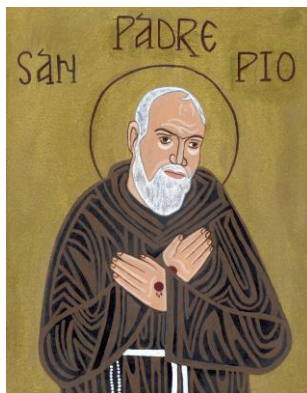
TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Timothy 6:2c-12; Luke 8:1-3 (447)*. "Some women were with Jesus who had been cured by him: Mary, called Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others."

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2017

MEMORIAL OF PIUS OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST Aid comes first

When Saint Pius of Pietrelcina—Padre Pio as he's widely known—decided he wanted to build a free hospital for the poor up the road from his friary, he started with a piece of land and a few friends and supporters. Four years later, in 1956, he had one of the most modern hospitals in Europe. Since the padre's death in 1968, the facility, which he wanted to be a "place of prayer and science," has quadrupled in size and stands as a dramatic tribute to the desire to help others and the determination to follow through. What seeds of service can you plant and cultivate?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Timothy 6:13-16; Luke 8:4-15 (448)*. "A sower went out to sow his seed."



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TAKE FIVE FOR FAITH DAILY RENEWAL FOR BUSY CATHOLICS ‡ ‡ ‡ THE TWENTY- FOURTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

For September 17 – 23, 2017

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

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