



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

SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2008

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST
Enjoy a full-bodied feast

The addition of today's feast to the church calendar was primarily the result of the work of 13th-century Augustinian nun Juliana of Liège. She worked in her convent's hospital nursing the sick. During this time she reported having visions of Christ reminding her that there was no feast for the Holy Sacrament. She persuaded Saint Thomas Aquinas to compose a special prayer to honor the Blessed Sacrament, and in 1264 Pope Urban IV made Corpus Christi a feast day. Today is a fitting day to ponder what it might mean for us to give ourselves "body and soul" to the Good News, as Jesus did.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; John 6:51-58*

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?"

MONDAY, MAY 26 FEAST OF PHILIP NERI, PRIEST

Conversion by any means

Though God is only and ever one and unchangeable, curiously there are a wide variety of ways by which people may come to God. Few understood this better than Saint Phillip Neri (1515-1595). Known for his unpredictability, Phillip took vastly different approaches to bringing people to a conversion. Once when a man came to his Oratory prayer meeting for the sole purpose of mocking it, Phillip refused to let him be thrown out or reproached. Eventually this man, seeing such patience, became a Dominican. In quite another example, when Phillip encountered a sinner who refused to listen to him or to repent, Phillip seized the man at the neck and threw him to the ground. The startled man pretty quickly consented to repentance! Consider how your small attempts at evangelization might be tailored to each individual.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 1:3-9; Mark 10:17-27*

"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

TUESDAY, MAY 27 FEAST OF AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, BISHOP

A mission of love

In the sixth century Pope Gregory I sent Saint Augustine and 40 other Benedictine monks on a daunting journey to bring the gospel to England. At that time the only missionaries in the West had been monks in Ireland, and Rome had lost touch with the Celtic church. As a missionary, Augustine was sensitive to cultural differences and sought not to coerce the English with the Good News but show them it was for their good, telling the king, Ethelbert, "Do not see us as coming to force upon an unknown people benefits against their will. Be assured that only a great love constrains us to do this." In witnessing to what we believe, we should start with where people are at, not where we want them to be, and try to show them the way of faith will enrich their lives.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 1:10-16; Mark 10:28-31*

"For it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28

First serve

All throughout history there have been truths that, once discovered and accepted, have changed everything. That the earth is round is one such truth; that the sun is the center of our solar system is another. The revolution in thought that followed these discoveries is hard to overstate. The same applies to spiritual truths: Once they are known and accepted, the unwieldy, disconnected pieces of our lives tend to fall into place and everything changes for the better.

Jesus' statement, "I came not to be served, but to serve," is one such radical, spiritual truth. If we lived our lives from this perspective, conflicts would be transcended and wisdom and compassion would prevail. Just for today, can I approach every task and every person with this attitude in mind?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 1:18-25; Mark 10:32-45*

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."

THURSDAY, MAY 29

Call forwarding

Mother Teresa—now Blessed Teresa of Calcutta—had a way of packing a lot of insight into statements that on the surface seemed pretty elementary. Take for example the way she described the Missionaries of Charity, the order she founded to care for the destitute dying and other "unwanted" persons: "Many people mistake our work for our vocation," she said. "Our vocation is the love of Jesus." Her words can apply to everyone. Whatever you do, put love for Jesus, and others, at the heart, and you will be truly living a vocation and a calling.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12; Mark 10:46-52*

"And they called to the blind man, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.'"

FRIDAY, MAY 30

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Listen to the beating of Love

The 13th-century mystic Saint Gertrude received a vision of John the Evangelist. Her first question to him concerned the night of the Last Supper when the disciple rested his head on Jesus' chest. She wondered, had he heard Christ's heart beating, and if so, why he had not revealed that to us. But John replied he had withheld this intimate revelation until a time when the world had grown cold.

Meditate on this intimacy, laying your head on the chest of Jesus and feeling his sacred heart beat for you, as sure and constant as the rising and setting sun. As long as it beats, it remains, as the Litany of the Sacred Heart tells us, patient and rich and mercy, the desire of the everlasting hills.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Deuteronomy 7:6-11; 1 John 4:7-16; Matthew 11:25-30*

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

SATURDAY, MAY 31 VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Let it begin with me

So many events in the Bible would never have occurred if humans had not believed enough to act in spite of their doubts and fears. In story after story we read that people are essential to carrying out God's plan for humanity. From Abraham and Sarah to Mary and Elizabeth, and continuing right down through the centuries to the present day, God inspires us to speak that courageous word, to offer that consoling message, to say "yes" to what we are asked to do.

You are God's hands and ears and mouth. The next time you feel the prompting of the spirit of God, ask yourself, "If not me, then who? If not now, when?"

TODAY'S READINGS: *Zephaniah 3:14-18a or Romans 12:9-16; Luke 1:39-56*

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

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Scripture quotes come from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

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