



AMY DIERER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Heal through service

The incomparable loss of life on 9/11 left a hole in the heart of this nation. For some, a desire for revenge was the initial and enduring response. For others, sorrow invaded all of life. For many of us, our sense of security was threatened. In 2009, Congress declared September 11 a National Day of Remembrance and Service. It reminds us that serving the needs of others is a way to heal the wounds caused by violence and fear. Open a door, carry a bag, or smile at a stranger today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-32 (132)*. "A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me."

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY

All generations call on you

At Jesus' conception Mary's good name (and her life) would be in jeopardy should it become known that she was pregnant while unmarried. Yet her name falls upon us today not as disgrace, but as *all* grace. Just speaking her name—often in the prayer "Hail Mary"—brings comfort to many in dire straits. Another traditional prayer, the Memorare, says, "never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided." Call upon Mary. She has been there, and she hears you.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 11:17-26, 33; Luke 7:1-10 (443)*. "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Sacrifice what holds you back

Today, many Muslims around the world celebrate Eid al Adha. It is also known as the Feast of Sacrifice or Festival of Sacrifice because it commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to God. Christians recognize Abraham as the Father of Judaism and his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, as a precursor to the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God on the cross. Today, let's pray in union with our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters for a desire to put aside—sacrifice—all things that get in the way of our relationship with God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27-31a; Luke 7:11-17 (444)*. "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'"



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

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Jesus turns tragedy to triumph

When Jesus was put on the cross to die, his punishment was intended to humiliate him and his followers and to extinguish his message once and for all. But that didn't happen. Instead, he rose from the dead, exalted by the Father, and his Good News has been shared on every continent for more than 2,000 years. Today, crosses grace our churches and homes. We even wear crosses as jewelry that identifies us as believers. The name of this feast says it well: The cross *is* a sign of exaltation. When you rise in the morning and retire at night, make the sign of the cross.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638)*. "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

How to bury the dead

When someone in our lives experiences loss, it's important to be with them in their mourning, as Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, reminds us. After Jesus' death, Mary was surrounded by a loving community. They couldn't bring her son back or alleviate her pain, but they did offer loving support. In this Year of Mercy, we are reminded to "bury the dead." Perhaps that work of mercy is about remembering the people in our lives who are mourning through our loving presence, listening ear, and shoulder to lean on.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (446); John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (639)*. "You yourself a sword will pierce, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

MEMORIAL OF CORNELIUS, POPE, AND CYPRIAN, BISHOP, MARTYRS

Forgive—no exceptions

In the give-and-take battles over doctrine in the third-century church, debate arose as to whether apostates—believers who renounce their faith—could be forgiven and restored to the church. Pope Cornelius said yes, but a priest named Novatian (who later became an "anti-pope") said apostasy could not be forgiven, nor murder, adultery, fornication, or second marriage. Our personal attitudes toward "those who trespass against us" tempt us to carve out exceptions to our forgiveness. This Jubilee Year reminds us that there are no exceptions to God's mercy. Should there be exceptions in your own forgiveness?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 8:1-3 (447)*. "Show your wondrous mercies, O savior of those who flee from their foes."

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

MEMORIAL OF ROBERT BELLARMINI, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Disagree without being disagreeable

Saint Robert Bellarmine was a Jesuit scholar, rector, college professor, and bishop who lived from 1542-1621. He was an intellectual who inspired many. Along the way, his strong opinions created controversy, yet he was known for his ability to engage in heated discussions without holding a grudge. And most significantly, he prayed each day for those with whom he disagreed. As we enter the full heat of this election year, Robert Bellarmine's life is a reminder to pray daily for those contending for public office, even—perhaps especially—for those with whom we disagree.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Luke 8:4-15 (448)*. "The seed on good ground are those who hear the word in a spirit of openness . . . and bear fruit through perseverance."