



We hope you will use these brief reflections everyday—and find that it helps you to grow closer to Christ. If you would prefer to receive the weekly file by e-mail, just send an e-mail message to [ghilke@neo.rr.com](mailto:ghilke@neo.rr.com) and say “add me to the Take Five list”.

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

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2009

### SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

#### Saints abound

How many saints are there? The lists of the canonized contain thousands of names, but the communion of saints is even fuller. In the Book of Revelation John of Patmos envisioned their number as vast and uncountable. It includes all the wonderful relatives and friends of happy memory, and a lot of really kind strangers you meet along the way. When you start to think about it, goodness encompasses a big, big number of folks. In the words of Saint Claude de la Colombiere: “It is possible to be a saint anywhere and everywhere when one really wishes to become one.”

TODAY'S READINGS: *Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12a*

*“There was a great multitude that no one could count . . . from all tribes and peoples and languages.”*

## MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2

### COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

#### Step outside the limits

The feast of the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, commonly known as All Souls Day, is the day the church has set aside to pray for everyone who has died. All Souls, however, is not only for the benefit of those who have gone before us. For the living it is an invitation to shift our attention away from the limits of ordinary time (past, present, and future) toward a spiritual concept of time—that is, God's time: the eternal now. As we do that, daily annoyances, minor crises, doubts, fears, and worries begin to dissolve, and we notice the enormity of the human experience. Practice taking the long view. What changes?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Wisdom 3:1-9; Romans 5:5-11 or 6:3-9; John 6:37-40*

*“But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them.”*

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

### FEAST OF MARTIN DE PORRES, RELIGIOUS

#### Determined to love

Having a dark-skinned mother (perhaps African, perhaps native) and a white father could have made Saint Martin de Porres bitter over the rejection he felt in 17th-century Peru. Instead, his mixed race opened his heart to all. Martin trained as a barber and eventually applied to the Dominicans, where he wished to remain a lay “helper.” The friars, however, saw his unbounded compassion and urged him to become a full member. As such he continued to care for slaves and orphans, working for the order and the city of Lima as a purveyor of food and goods while finding time to act as a spiritual director for many. Pope John XXIII said at his 1962 canonization: “He deserved to be called Martin of Charity.” There's no stopping a heart bent on caring.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 12:5-16b; Luke 14:15-24*

*“Love one another with mutual affection.”*

## WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4

### FEAST OF CHARLES BORROMEO, BISHOP

#### Reform begins with you

The 16th-century bishop Charles Borromeo didn't only “talk the talk,” he “walked the walk.” As the Council of Trent tried to reform questionable practices in the church, Borromeo believed that if the laity was being asked to uphold a higher moral standard, the clergy needed to set the example and renew their apostolic spirit. He gave generously from church wealth to charity, and during the plague and

famine that struck Milan in 1576, while civil authorities fled and to the detriment of his own health, Borromeo stayed and ministered to the sick and dying, borrowing large sums of money that required years to repay. How will you set an example of apostolic spirit today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 13:8-10; Luke 14:25-33*

*"None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."*

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

### What's one life worth?

Having children is a huge risk. It's not like a box of chocolates; you can always put a bad candy back in the box. But raising a family is a pure roll of the dice; you could gain a lot, but you could lose everything. Then why do so many do it? Because it's worth it. In the same way, the shepherd leaves the 99—a *huge* risk—and searches out the lost one. God is willing to sacrifice everything. No wonder there's such joy when the lost are found.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 14:7-12; Luke 15:1-10*

*"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?"*

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

### Make no mistake about it

In the short story *Greville Fane* author Henry James notes of his fictional character, the popular writer Mrs. Stormer, that "she had an unequalled gift, especially pen in hand, of squeezing big mistakes into small opportunities." Although Mrs. Stormer's story was fictional, we know all too well about making big mistakes in the nonfiction of our own lives. We can't avoid all mistakes, but we can learn from them and make amends for any harm caused. Like Mrs. Stormer, we can become gifted in our ability to squeeze big mistakes into small opportunities. That takes practice and a willingness to admit both that we've fallen short and that we have the capacity to grow. What small opportunity might be waiting around the corner for you?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 15:14-21; Luke 16:1-8*

*"And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly."*

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

### All the big things are little things

In today's gospel passage, Jesus says something very peculiar about money: "Make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes." Huh? Was he providing a justification for corrupt politicians and fraudulent financiers to do their dirty deeds? And would such dishonesty get them into heaven? No. But he was pointing out what would happen if people gave as much attention to following the ways of God as they did to the pursuit of money. Think of the things you do with great care. How can you do the same for your faith?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Luke 16:9-15*

*"Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."*

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