



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 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 8, 2009

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Have a generous point of view

In praising the widow who gave her last two coins to the temple treasury, Jesus is not suggesting that you and I need to give away our last penny. Rather, Jesus acknowledges that it is often the poorest of the poor who show the greatest charity, who risk the most to be loving. Jesus criticized the scribes and priests not only because of their apparent stinginess in donating to the Temple, but also because people such as the widow were often made poor by those in power who laid religious taxes and excessive expectations upon them. It is the responsibility of governments, churches, and individuals not only to come to the relief of the poor but to prevent them from being crushed in the first place.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Kings 17:10-16; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44 or 12:41-44*

“But she out of her poverty has put in . . . all she had to live on.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA IN ROME

How firm a foundation

If any building in Christianity can be said to have a long history, it would be the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. Starting as the site of an ancient Roman mansion and then a barracks for the imperial guard, the Lateran Palace later served as a meeting place of church councils. The emperor Constantine built and enriched a cathedral there—which was pillaged by barbarians and burnt down on several occasions, only to be rebuilt. From Roman house to the remodeling of the church that gave it its present appearance in 1735: about 2,000 years. Then add the time since then, and the centuries start to add up. This sacred building, and others like it, testify to the enduring witness of faith.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17; John 2:13-22*

“No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

FEAST OF LEO THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Holding it together

Elected in 440 A.D., Pope Saint Leo I assumed leadership of the church in the midst of the quickening disintegration of the Roman Empire, when both Western and Eastern Europe were becoming increasingly decentralized. As a result, understanding about the nature of Christ and salvation similarly underwent a variety of interpretations. One school of thought prevalent at the time taught that Christ's life and death were merely an example that we should follow, rather than a sacrifice for our salvation. Taking his position seriously, Leo greatly strengthened and consolidated Roman authority on matters of doctrine.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Wisdom 2:23-3:9; Luke 17:7-10*

“Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love.”

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

FEAST OF MARTIN OF TOURS, BISHOP

The advent of Advent

For centuries Lent was not the only 40-day season of fasting and abstinence in church tradition. Devotion to Saint Martin of Tours was so popular that from the time of his death in 397 until the Middle Ages his November 11 feast day inaugurated a 40-day period of fasting in much of Western Europe and Great Britain. The fast was known as “St. Martin's Lent,” “St. Martin's Fast,” or “Quadragesima

Sancti Martini”—“the 40 days of Saint Martin.” The feast day itself was celebrated with hearty food and drink, with a fast to follow, much as Lent is preceded by Mardi Gras. Saint Martin’s Fast later gave way to our present-day season of Advent, during which the spirit of quiet restraint continues. Get your Advent off to an early start this year!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Wisdom 6:1-11; Luke 17:11-19*

“*Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.*”

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

FEAST OF JOSAPHAT, BISHOP, MARTYR

All Catholics East and West

When people use the word Catholic, just about everyone thinks Roman Catholic. But there are other kinds of Catholics, too, like some churches found in Eastern Europe, who are in communion with the Roman Catholic Church but who celebrate liturgy much like the Eastern Orthodox Church. Way back in the 15th and 16th centuries Saint Josaphat worked to bring the Eastern and Western churches closer together, and for his efforts was killed in 1623. Of this unity he said to the people of Vitebsk, in present-day Belarus, where he was bishop: “I am here among you as a shepherd, and you ought to know that I would be happy to give my life for you. I am ready to die for the holy union” In memory of Josaphat pray for the unity of Christians today.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Wisdom 7:22b-8:1; Luke 17:20-25*

“*Wisdom . . . reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well.*”

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

FEAST OF FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI, VIRGIN

The education of the heart

Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important skills to master. But even in the late 1800s, Mother Cabrini insisted that children needed more than these fundamentals to thrive. In her schools she stressed the need for music, drama, art, and physical education as well, calling that a God-centered approach based on love of the whole person. By creating an environment of warm relationships, “education becomes an act of love,” she taught the sisters in the religious order she founded. We learn best from those who love us.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Wisdom 13:1-9; Luke 17:26-37*

“*From the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.*”

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

A deferred prayer

There’s a story told about a woman who prayed to the Virgin that one of her sons would become a priest. She had seven sons, but all of them married and raised families. Then she prayed that one of her grandsons would become a priest. She had many grandsons, but none chose that life. The woman continued her prayer. She was almost a 100 years old and near death when one of her grandsons, at the age of 33, decided to become a priest. She died a happy woman knowing her lifelong prayer was finally answered. The story is true, told by the priest himself. Prayer works; you just have to keep at it.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9; Luke 18:1-8*

“*Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.*”

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Contributors: Father Paul Boudreau, Alice Camille, Daniel Grippo, Father Larry Janowski, O.F.M., Ann O’Connor, Sean Reynolds, Joel Schorn, Patrice J. Tuohy, and Sister Julie Vieira, I.H.M.