



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 15, 2009

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

With you even if the stars fall from the sky

Some of the stories in the Bible read like a science-fiction thriller or horror drama. In the apocalyptic literature, such as the book of Daniel, we read of the sun and moon darkening, stars falling out of the sky, and the very “powers in the heavens” shaken at their core. In his stories the author used strong, vivid images his community could relate to. They were women and men who were under immense stress and oppression and who worried for their safety and the safety of their children. They needed to know that no matter what, even if the sun should cease to give light, God would continue to be with them. What would your story look like? What word of encouragement would you seek from God?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mark 13:24-32*

“Know that he is near.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

FEAST OF GERTRUDE, VIRGIN

Corrective lenses

Sometimes we need a little help seeing clearly. Various devices aid our focus, from eyeglasses and contact lenses to microscopes and telescopes. For Saint Gertrude (the only female saint to earn the title “the Great”), correcting her vision came about by changing the direction she was facing. A brilliant young Benedictine sister, she excelled in the study of philosophy and literature. Then she received a vision of Jesus, urging her to trade in her pursuit of the humanities for divinity studies. Gertrude’s heart was ignited with a new flame, and she became a profound mystic. Sometimes seeing clearly means shifting our perspective, too.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-63; Luke 18:35-43*

“Lord, let me see again.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

FEAST OF ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, RELIGIOUS

Give it your all

Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) lived a short 24 years, but somehow in that time she was able to understand and practice the virtue of generosity at a level few have matched before or since. She was a queen who spent her wealth on the poor. She established hospitals and helped care for the sick, much to the shock and chagrin of her in-laws. After her beloved husband’s death, Elizabeth became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and continued living out the truth of Saint Francis of Assisi’s prayer: “For it is in giving that we receive.” For an inspiring, contemporary story of the physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits of giving, visit the website www.29gifts.org.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Maccabees 6:18-31; Luke 19:1-10*

“Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor.”

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

FEAST OF ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE, VIRGIN

Worth the trip

Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne (1769-1852), born in France, traveled all the way to St. Charles, Missouri to bring the Society of the Sacred Heart religious congregation to the U.S. Today the Society has 21 schools in the U.S. and is found in 44 countries around the world. Sacred Heart sisters focus on educating young women and emphasize in their curriculum the need for global awareness and

building a more just world. How far are you willing to go in your own life in order to bring Good News to others? Start in your own neighborhood, parish, office, home, and see how far the intention carries you.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31; Luke 19:11-28*
"Well done, good servant!"

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Getting away from it all

Gone on a retreat lately? Most areas have places to make retreats, frequently run by religious orders or dioceses. Retreats come in all shapes and sizes: individual or group, programmed or unstructured, a day or a weekend or a week. You can use them to get back in touch with what's most important spiritually or just to get some rest. Going on a retreat, though, doesn't have to mean blocking out time, making a reservation, and hitting the road. One retreat you can always make is the one in the silence of your heart. "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him," says Psalm 62:5. Wherever you are, you can take a few minutes each day to stop what you're doing, clear your mind, and place yourself in the silence of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Maccabees 2:15-29; Luke 19:41-44*
"Many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to live there."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

What do you call holy?

Human beings seem to have a natural desire to build, to raise monuments and dwellings, even for God. The trouble is that building a house for what is sacred may suggest having domesticated what is boundless. Once we believed we've "tamed" the holy, we have reversed the roles of Creator and creature. This presumption obviously troubled Jesus because all four gospels tell the story of him losing his temper and forcefully expelling those who had turned temple into marketplace. On the other hand, in American culture the marketplace seems to have become our temple, and the simple, practical business of buying and selling a sacred ritual conducted in templelike malls and churchlike banks. We do well to consider what we have enshrined as sacred in our lives.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59; Luke 19:45-48*
"My house shall be a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers."

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Bear with her

If asked to whom the title *Theotokos* refers, many Roman Catholics would be at a loss. Not so in Eastern Orthodox Churches, where the term—literally "God-bearer" in Greek—is widely familiar as a reference to Mary, the mother of God. The term has a long pedigree, going back to the First Council of Ephesus in 431. It is fitting that today's Marian feast is celebrated by both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and it offers a unique opportunity for each of us to do some bridge-building between the two traditions. Tip your hat or give a nod toward the East today!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Maccabees 6:1-13; Luke 20:27-40*
"Teacher, you have spoken well."

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