



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 22, 2009

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

Christ rules

The feast of Christ the King was created by Pope Pius XI in 1925 to remind us that Jesus is the true king of all creation and that he “must reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies,” the pope wrote. The transition time between the end of one liturgical year and the beginning of another is a good time for reflection and preparation. In what ways during the past year did you allow Christ to rule over your heart, mind, will, and body? Next, write yourself a letter stating your spiritual intentions for the coming year. Put it in a self-addressed, stamped envelope and give the letter to someone to mail a few months from now. The mid-year reminder will do you good.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:5-8; John 18:33b-37*
“My kingdom does not belong to this world.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

FEAST OF CLEMENT I, POPE, MARTYR

All hands on deck

When it comes to early church leaders, it doesn't get much earlier than Clement I, who is believed to have died around the year 100. We don't know much about his life, but we do know he was a prominent leader of the early church in Rome. Tradition has it that Clement was martyred during a persecution by being tied to an anchor and thrown overboard. Religious persecution of any kind is a social disease that must be resisted at all costs. Become aware of the ways in which it is still with us today and do your part to build a more tolerant environment for all to worship as they choose.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20; Luke 21:1-4*
“This poor widow put in more than all of them.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

FEAST OF ANDREW DUNG-LAC, PRIEST, MARTYR, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Built with kindness

It is said that the Holy City of God is built with the good deeds of the saints. When Andrew Dung-Lac was growing up in Hanoi in the early 1800s, he and his poor Buddhist family were cared for and fed by Christian missionaries. Despite unspeakable persecutions, Andrew became a Christian and was eventually ordained a priest. He endured horrible suffering but persevered until the emperor finally had him beheaded. Even as his life was being torn down, the good deeds the missionaries did for Andrew and his family sustained his faith and built up his hope. Isn't it amazing what a little kindness can do?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 2:31-45; Luke 21:5-11*
“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another.”

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

FEAST OF CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGIN, MARTYR

Some can't handle the truth, others die for it

Saint Catherine of Alexandria was a woman to be reckoned with. Not only was she a scholar and skilled public speaker, but she also was confident in her calling from God. Knowing full well that this combination of gifts could get her in trouble, Catherine challenged the Roman emperor himself for his unjust persecution of Christians during the fourth century. Unable to disprove Catherine's arguments or sway her from her faith, the emperor had her killed. But the angry, senseless act of one person

could not put a stop to God's continued activity through Catherine. To this day she is still known as friend to all who call on her name. For what or whom would you be willing to go out on a limb?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28; Luke 21:12-19*

"They will arrest you and persecute you. . . . This will give you an opportunity to testify."

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

THANKSGIVING DAY

As Providence would have it

As you sit down to your Thanksgiving meal today, be sure to give thanks to President Abraham Lincoln, and even more so to Sarah Josepha Hale. A prominent 19th-century journalist, Hale campaigned tirelessly for a national Thanksgiving holiday. In the midst of the Civil War and prompted by Hale's editorials and letters, Lincoln called the nation to pause in thanksgiving in 1863. His proclamation read in part: "The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. . . . [Other blessings] have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 6:12-28; Luke 21:20-28*

"Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Verbal tattoos

To some folks it makes perfect sense to have the name of a loved one indelibly inked on their flesh, inscribed with a heart-and-arrow to demonstrate how permeated they are by the relationship. But most of us don't need to literally write words on our bodies because words bond with our psyches most naturally. Still remember the names you were known by on the playground? Recall the words of praise or blame affixed to you by parents and teachers? How about adding to those indelible memories some life-giving words from the Bible? Fall in love with a verse today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 7:2-14; Luke 21:29-33*

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

The beginning of the end

Jesus spoke of the end of time in different ways, but his constant message was to keep watch. Be on the lookout for him now, and you will be prepared when he comes again. In saying this, he was not only counseling the avoidance of self-indulgence but also calling for a good deal of freedom. Watchfulness means freeing yourself not only from your sins but also from things such as worry that can be just as burdensome. Being attuned to the ways you can invite Jesus into your life in every moment frees you to love God and neighbor more fully—a love with which Christ will repay you in the end.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Daniel 7:15-27; Luke 21:34-36*

"Be alert at all times."

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