



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

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2008

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Aiming too low

It must have stung Peter to have Jesus call him *Satan*, especially because Jesus had already chosen him to be the foundation rock of his community of believers. Peter, in his bullheadedness, seems a good stand-in for many of us, taking the heat for what we ourselves might have done or said (“What’s in it for us, Lord?”). Here he is merely expressing his care for Jesus by saying, as any of us would to someone we love, “God forbid that any tragedy should fall upon you.” Yet Jesus reprimands him because Peter cannot see beyond his desire to protect his Lord (and perhaps himself) from the terrible fate Jesus foresees. Peter does not yet see how great a cost a “wondrous love” will pay to accomplish good. By God’s standard no price is too high. Peter, we know, will learn.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27*

“Get behind me, Satan! You are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 LABOR DAY

Safety first

On the holiday to honor work and workers, it’s worth remembering that workplaces are not always as safe as they could be. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 28,000 Americans between 2002 and 2006 were killed on the job. Mining had a high fatality rate—27.8 per 100,000—but was second to agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting at 29.6. In 2005 U.S. workplaces had 4.2 million nonfatal injuries and illnesses, of which about 4 million were injuries. While the U.S. industrial safety record has improved drastically since 1900—when, for example, the mining fatality rate was 10 times higher than today—and is far better than that of the developing world, it’s worse than that of most countries in the European Union. What can you do to promote the safety of work and workers?

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Luke 4:16-30*

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.”

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 RAMADAN BEGINS

Think fast

Fasting for religious or spiritual purposes is an ancient human practice. Jews, Christians, and Muslims consider their periods of fast (Yom Kippur, Lent, and Ramadan) the holiest times of the year, and these three great religious traditions share similar goals for fasting: namely, to cleanse the body and mind of impurities, focus all attention and energy on God, repent for one’s sins, mourn losses, and remember graces received. As Muslims enter their month-long fast, be respectful of their holy obligation and consider what your holy obligations are as a follower of the Prince of Peace.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 2:10b-16; Luke 4:31-37*

“For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

All together now

Whether it’s family, work, school activities, or the neighborhood bowling team, for groups to function and achieve a common goal individual members need to figure out how to work together.

While a little competition can be healthy, the cutthroat variety usually ends up dividing people and working against the collective effort. Saint Paul used this same argument when he told the Corinthians to stop their rivalries and factions and work together for the kingdom of God. Cooperation and respect will take people a lot further than conflict.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Luke 4:38-44*

“For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

In deep water

We use the phrase “in over your head” to indicate being in a situation that presents challenges that go beyond a person’s capacity or resources to cope. People sometimes “get in over their head” financially or find themselves in a classroom or a job function for which they have not been properly prepared. In a larger sense, however, we are all “in over our heads” in life, part of something more vast, mysterious, and complex than we alone can manage. We need each other, and we need the guidance of One who can guide us as we navigate the deep water we find ourselves in.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Luke 5:1-11*

“Jesus said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Something old, something new

It’s hard to imagine the time when Christ and his message was new, but indeed they were. At the beginning many people had trouble accepting his person and his gospel, just as many do today. Back then they wanted to see him in terms of what was familiar, well-known, comfortable. But he tried to move them off this course. New things, like new wine or a piece of a new garment, do not go onto or into old things, like old wineskins or garments. Can you experience your faith as something new and maybe a little uncomfortable, challenging you to fresh ways of seeing and doing?

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Luke 5:33-39*

“New wine must be put into fresh wineskins.”

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Peace is with us

“The moral right to conscientious objection is recognized in the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church (sect. 2311), but it is in no sense mandatory,” noted St. Thomas University Professor Scott Wright in a recent issue of *St. Thomas Magazine*. “Still, as a form of Christian witness, pacifism—the opposition to all war—has also had a long and distinguished tradition.” This tradition is rooted in Jesus’ Beatitudes and the gift of peace he leaves with his disciples; it is further sustained by Saint Paul’s admonishment to the church in Corinth to be fools for Christ—and bless when reviled, endure when persecuted, and speak kindly when slandered. Peace be with you today and every day following.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Corinthians 4:6b-15; Luke 6:1-5*

“When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly.”

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Scripture quotes come from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Contributors: Father Paul Boudreau, Alice Camille, Daniel Grippo, Father Larry Janowski, Ann O’Connor, Sean Reynolds, Joel Schorn, Patrice J. Tuohy