



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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2012 SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME “Here I am”

Throughout the Bible when God would call on someone by name, the answer would be: “Here I am.” Many saints throughout the church’s history responded with the same willingness to serve God’s will for them, whether it be to start a hospital, feed the poor, educate the young, or shelter the elderly. Even when the task seemed overwhelming, they pursued it. Faced with the challenge of founding a community and an academy in the then-wilderness of Indiana, Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods, wrote: “All appearances are against it.” But establish it she did. Look for opportunities to say an unconditional “yes!” to love and serve others as God loves you.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20; John 1:35-42 (65)*
“Here I am. You called me.”

MONDAY, JANUARY 16 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY Getting head and heart right

“One day we will learn that the heart can never be totally right if the head is totally wrong.” The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote that in his book *Strength to Love* in 1963. He underscored the necessity of taking responsibility for the formation of our consciences—including *informing* our consciences through ongoing education even after formal classroom days are behind us. After all, integrity doesn’t mean simply holding to your principles and actions in tandem with each other. You have to be sure, first of all, that your convictions are tied to more than your preferences, biases, and opinions! To be tethered to true north, reflect on scripture daily.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Samuel 15:16-23; Mark 2:18-22 (311)*
“No one puts new wine into old wineskins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.”

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17 FEAST OF ANTHONY, ABBOT Turn down the distractions

On the feast of Saint Anthony of the Desert, we recall that there has been, almost from the beginning, a way of following Christ that draws the believer away from busyness, away from noise, away from the sense stimulation that many experts say we are becoming addicted to. We respond reflexively not to what is most important in life but to the latest signal, beep, buzz, or ringtone to impinge upon our consciousness. Few of us have a desert at hand where we can retreat and listen to the still, small voice of God, but perhaps there is a park, a rooftop, a chapel, a parked car with the radio off that can offer a chance for contemplation, for quietly considering the things that really matter.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Samuel 16:1-13; Mark 2:23-28 (312)*
“The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. That is why the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18 Fighting Goliath

It’s challenging to face off with the monsters of one’s own making in this world: relationships that are fraying, decisions poorly made, today’s bills that reflect yesterday’s foolish purchases. How can we also be expected to fight the monsters who owe their creation to the forces of history? Take, for example, the sad divisions that make up Christian history. You and I didn’t forge the breach between Rome and today’s Lutherans, Anglicans, Baptists, and

Methodists. Yet as we prepare for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we’re asked to reach out across this scarred battlefield and recall the Christ who invited all to be his friends.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Mark 3:1-6 (313)*
“You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy.”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY BEGINS How to be a real winner

The theme of this year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, “We shall all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ,” asks us to consider the entrenched role of winners and losers in our society and then to move beyond such oppositional thinking. Our prayer this week is to reach toward the level of awareness where opposites like winners and losers are transcended and reconciled through the forces of love and compassion. That is the “victory” of this year’s theme. That is the mindset of Jesus. That kind of change, however, is going to take more than a week. Still, we must begin where we are. What will you do to put this prayer into action?

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19-1-7; Mark 3:7-12 (314)*
“Hearing what he was doing, a large number of people came to him.”

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20 FEAST OF FABIAN, MARTYR, POPE AND SEBASTIAN, MARTYR Take this call seriously

Saint Sebastian, the patron saint of soldiers, and Saint Fabian, who was chosen as pope by the sign of a dove descending from above, were both men who embraced what God had called them to do and eventually gave their lives for Christ. They accepted the opportunities God offered them and fought through persecution because they believed in the unconditional love of God. The apostles did the same when Jesus summoned them up a mountain. By emulating the apostles and Sebastian and Fabian, we allow ourselves to fully accept our true vocation from Jesus.

TODAY’S READINGS: *1 Samuel 24:3-21; Mark 3:13-19 (315)*
“Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those whom he wanted and they came to him.”

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 FEAST OF AGNES, VIRGIN, MARTYR The most vulnerable deserve the most protection

The stories of child sex abuse that have come out recently remind us in no uncertain terms that the exploitation of the youngest and most vulnerable among us is an ongoing and serious problem. Today in the church calendar we remember Saint Agnes, who died at the tender age of 13 back in the year 304 A.D. It was said that as punishment for refusing a forced marriage to the son of a Roman official, young Agnes was dragged naked through the streets of Rome to a brothel where she was raped and then executed. A horrific tale of child abuse no doubt, but one that has been repeated in some form or another through the ages. It is time for Christians to speak with one voice worldwide to denounce the abuse of children wherever and whenever it occurs.

TODAY’S READINGS: *2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 19, 23-27; Mark 3:20-21 (316)*
“Rouse your power, and come to save us.”

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