



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

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2008

SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

Feel the power

When the disciples gathered for the “first” Pentecost, the stage was set for something dramatic to happen. The Jewish feast of Pentecost was a harvest festival but also the celebration of God’s covenants with the Israelites, especially Moses receiving the law at Mt. Sinai. So when the roaring wind of the Spirit swept in, it seemed to be coming all the way from the breath of God that swept over the waters at the creation of the world. And the gift of tongues undid the post-Tower of Babel confusion: now, many languages, but everyone understands. In that first Pentecost God gifted the church with God’s presence, with signs of a new covenant and a renewal of creation that would go out to the whole world. Catch that Spirit today.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23*

“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind.”

MONDAY, MAY 12 FEAST OF NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS

Not in words only, but deeds

The New Testament Letter of James is not without contention in Christian history. Whatever its authorship, its purpose is clear: to remind us of what is expected in the daily living of those who belong to Christ Jesus. James encourages those who bear trials—perhaps not unlike Nereus and Achilleus, ancient and otherwise unknown martyrs whom we celebrate today. The oppression that most interests James, however, is that which divides the rich and poor, an injustice no Christian should stand for. James is all about faith in action. Sadly, the divide between rich and poor is as true today as ever, even in our own country, and just as wrong.

TODAY’S READINGS: *James 1:1-11; Mark 8:11-13*

“The testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

TUESDAY, MAY 13 FEAST OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Good to see you!

In a wonderful book called *Our Lady of the Lost and Found*, by Diane Schoemperlen, which Mary lovers should not miss, Our Lady appears to a modern-day unsuspecting Protestant woman. “It’s me, Mary,” she says. “Mother of God.” Not getting a reaction, Our Lady winsomely continues introducing herself with a litany of names by which she’s been known throughout history. Finally, the narrator has the presence of mind to answer: “Hello.” Some of us might do no better. Those who have reported apparitions of Mary have often had a hard time upholding their end of the conversation. Prepare by starting the conversation today.

TODAY’S READINGS: *James 1:12-18; Mark 8:14-21*

“Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear?”

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 FEAST OF MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

Like winning the lottery

Awareness of our vocation doesn’t arrive in cookie-cutter fashion. Some of us always knew what we were born to do, and others discover it along the way. One young girl knew she wanted to be a speech therapist when she saw a soap opera character play the role. An encounter with an enthusiastic teacher can lead to a life in education. A visit to an art museum can awaken the creative urge, or a lifelong hobby can become a business venture. Mat-

thias became the 13th apostle by a casting of lots. Keep your eyes open; vocation will find you.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; John 15:9-17*

“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”

THURSDAY, MAY 15

FEAST OF ISIDORE

Food for thought

“Eating is a moral act,” says the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (www.ncrlc.com), an organization that “applies the teachings of Jesus Christ for the social and economic development of rural America with responsibility for the care of God’s creation.” By providing spiritual support, education, and advocacy, the NCRLC helps rural people shape their own destinies and lead lives of dignity. As we honor Isidore, a Spanish farmer of simple means remembered for his generosity with those less fortunate, today is a good day to take a look at the U.S. Catholic bishops’ 2003 pastoral letter on food and farm issues, *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food*.

TODAY’S READINGS: *James 2:1-9; Mark 8:27-33*

“Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?”

FRIDAY, MAY 16

A world away

The news is full of stories of people in positions of power who have misused their status for personal advantage, and so it’s easy to dismiss as “not intended for me” Jesus’ famous question to his followers, what profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? But the “whole world” is a relative term, and we have all sought it at various times—whether that world is money, influence, or the admiration of our family. Any time we let the ends justify the means, we are seeking to gain the whole world. In what ways have we sought to “gain the whole world” and what has been lost in the pursuit? What small change can we make today to rebalance our priorities?

TODAY’S READINGS: *James 2:14-24, 26; Mark 8:34-9:1*

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for the sake of the gospel will save it.”

SATURDAY, MAY 17

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Knowing the Beloved

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has this whopping statement to make about Mary: “The Marian dimension of the church precedes the Petrine” (no. 773). In other words, she’s bigger than the pope and has more primacy than Peter. And she, like the Father, can speak of her beloved Son and the need for us to listen to him. Mary knew Jesus in her body just as we know Jesus in our own bodies through the mystery of the Eucharist. From within his words still speak to us when we study the gospels. Wouldn’t today be a good day to listen to what he has to say?

TODAY’S READINGS: *James 3:1-10; Mark 9:2-13*

“From the cloud there came a voice, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!’”

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