



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

## SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2008

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

### A shining example

It's no accident that Christians have been trying to figure out how to understand the Trinity for as long as they have been thinking about God. On the surface this doctrine has more apparent contradictions than the instructions for your income tax return. How can three be one and one three, different and the same? One God, three "persons"? No wonder people have resorted to metaphors to try to explain it.

The first- and second-century African theologian Tertullian, who apparently invented the term *Trinity*, said it was like the rays of the sun or branches from a root: the same material, different outflows. Perhaps it's simplest to say that we can think of God in more than one way—as a creator, a human being, an ongoing presence, among others. Or that God is a community of love that draws us into that divine life of love. However you imagine it, immerse yourself in this inexhaustible mystery that tells us so much about who God is.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18*

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."*

## MONDAY, MAY 19

### Father knows best what to pray for

Many of us can relate to the worried father in the gospel story who wished his faith was a little—or maybe a lot—stronger. We'd all like to have the kind of faith extolled in the famous hymn "Faith of Our Fathers." Perhaps more often sung in Protestant churches than Catholic ones today, this hymn ironically was written by an Anglican who converted to Catholicism. The "fathers" author Frederick W. Faber referred to were not the early "Fathers of the Church," as many assume, but the leaders of the Catholic Church who died during King Henry VIII's establishment of the Anglican Church in Great Britain. Pray for an extra dose of faith today as you face your own challenges.

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 3:13-18; Mark 9:14-29*

*"Immediately the father of the child cried out, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'"*

## TUESDAY, MAY 20 FEAST OF BERNARDINE OF SIENA, PRIEST

### Up the down staircase

One of things that makes Christianity unique is the fact that the road to glory is frequently a lowly one. Take Saint Bernardine, for example. Born in 1380, he started "down," becoming a hermit at a young age. Then there was an up, when he joined the Franciscans and was assigned the task of preaching. But wait, he had a throat illness. No problem: He was cured of that. Up again when the Franciscans made him head of the order and down when he resigned this position to devote himself to preaching. He spent the rest of his life on an up note, traveling throughout Italy preaching the name of Jesus. Where can you take a step down in order to step up to your Christian calling?

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 4:1-10; Mark 9:30-37*

*"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."*

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

### Where did the bad guys go?

In the popular, low-budget westerns of the 1940s and 1950s, the good guys wore white hats and the bad guys dressed in black. In the gospel the disciples rush to Jesus to finger one of the

"bad guys" for performing miracles in Jesus' name without prior clearance. But Jesus had another script in mind, one that does not need to be the director in control of all the good action that comes about because of his inspiration. In the same way, we as individuals and as church communities do well to examine our own need to "be in control."

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 4:13-17; Mark 9:38-40*

*"For whoever is not against us is for us."*

## THURSDAY, MAY 22 FEAST OF RITA OF CASCIA, RELIGIOUS

### In support of marriage and family

If you knew you would be canonized a saint and could choose your patronage now, for what cause would you cheerfully accept intercessions? Be careful in your selection: Saints become the patrons of causes they know all too well. Rita of Cascia is the patron saint of bad marriages, victims of spousal abuse, and loneliness, among other conditions she endured personally. Unhappily, there are still many who seek her help today. Statistics indicate that spousal abuse occurs as frequently in the best zip codes as in the roughest. Support local programs that assist families in trouble.

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 5:1-6; Mark 9:41-50*

*"Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward."*

## FRIDAY, MAY 23

### Pray for significant others

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that "the relationship between man and woman . . . has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation" (1606).

What to do? If you have ever prayed for someone besides yourself, or if you've been told by someone that he or she prayed for you, you know that praying for another person is one of the most unselfish acts we can do for one another. Any day in a marriage is a good day for unselfish acts. Decide to pray open-heartedly for your spouse. If you are not married but would like to be, say a prayer for your spouse-to-be. Or simply say a prayer for someone you love. Then see what changes.

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 5:9-12; Mark 10:1-12*

*"Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."*

## SATURDAY, MAY 24

### All things to all people

The picture of Jesus embracing children is irresistible and sentimental. This is a Jesus we like and want to be close to, but our affection and welcome of others may not be limited to the cuddly. The Letter to James insists on the relatedness of one Christian to another, brothers and sisters, both those who are "in good spirits" and those "suffering." In all cases we are to be with one another, forgiving each other, bringing each other to the Lord, and most of all praying for each other. "The prayer of the righteous is very powerful," especially prayer made concrete in loving kindness that imitates that of the love of Christ.

TODAY'S READINGS: *James 5:13-20; Mark 10:13-16*

*"The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful."*

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

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