



SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2015

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

The mystery in the middle

Time can seem an endless ocean behind and ahead of us, with horizons revealing nothing but more of the same. Yet history has a center, theologically speaking: the resurrection of Jesus, which redeems and restores all that went before or lies ahead. The traditional Proclamation of the Date of Easter chanted on the feast of Epiphany honors this understanding. Every great church feast finds its place in relationship to the date of Easter. Your life, too, no matter your present circumstances, has Easter joy and hope at the heart of it.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12 (20)*. "Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you."

MONDAY, JANUARY 5 FEAST OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP

Saddle up!

John Neumann wanted to be ordained so badly that he came to America from his native Bohemia in 1836 with nothing more than the clothes on his back and one dollar. Thanks to his diligent studies before arriving, he was ordained three weeks later. Assigned to a rural locale, he got around by horseback though he was so short his feet did not reach the stirrups. Though folks initially made fun of their small priest, in no time they saw how large was his heart, his mind, his vision, and his energy. Don't let your limitations hold you back—let God transform them into your greatest strengths.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 3:22-4:6; Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25 (212)*. "He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues."

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Heartfelt love

There's nothing more precious than a gift given from the heart. These gifts are so special because they capture the essence of true relationship by pointing to a love more valuable than any material good. Out of love, God gave his Son, the ultimate gift. Jesus lived and loved with his whole heart. He was God and he was real. He rejoiced, had pity, laughed, and cried. Receiving the gift of Christ requires loving from the heart in that same way. It means being in relationship and loving freely, without judgment or boundaries. What greater gift is there than that?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:7-10; Mark 6:34-44 (213)*. "Give them some food yourselves."

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7 FEAST OF RAYMOND OF PEÑAFORT, PRIEST

Advance by serving

Competition in the workplace trains us to push for the most prestigious position, title, salary, office. But there are other paths. Raymond was a gifted canon lawyer in medieval Spain who, after a career of service to the church, shunned the high offices given to him. Appointed archbishop but disliking the pomp of the position,

he resigned in two years. Elected as Saint Dominic's successor to head the worldwide order of Dominicans, he held the post long enough to amend the order's constitution to allow him to resign, which he promptly did. Servant of the Lord was the only title he needed. How about you?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:11-18; Mark 6:45-52 (214)*. "He went off to the mountain to pray."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8 CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Reaching resolutions

The practice of making resolutions at the beginning of a new year predates Christianity. It's natural to try to make a fresh start when the calendar rolls over. The most common New Year's resolutions usually involve physical improvement: lose weight, exercise more, quit unhealthy habits. Those are certainly important goals, but what about also resolving to improve the physical world around you as Jesus did, bringing glad tidings to the poor, liberty to captives, and sight to the blind? Why not balance the deprivation of a diet with the gratification of helping others?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 4:19-5:4; Luke 4:14-22a (215)*. "Proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9 CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

Sign on to God's presence

The experience of illness can often be one of isolation. Being ill can lead to a sense of separation from family, friends, and co-workers. It is a time of great vulnerability. In the midst of these feelings, it can be challenging to remain open to relationships, even with God. Yet in such circumstances, God is present, perhaps more profoundly than ever. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1503) reminds us that Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people." In what ways can you be a resplendent sign of God's presence today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 5:5-13; Luke 5:12-16 (216)*. "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 CHRISTMAS WEEKDAY

A divine mix

As the Christmas season ends, our attention shifts from the Incarnation (the en-fleshing of God) toward the grace of Baptism by which our flesh, our humanity, is divinized. A prayer at every Mass makes it clear as a few drops of water are added to the chalice of wine: "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity"—a share in Christ's godliness. Amazing! And yet it is so. As a drop of water mingled with wine can never be separated again, because of your Baptism, here and now and for eternity you participate in God's life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 John 5:14-21; John 3:22-30 (217)*. "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven."



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

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