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SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2017 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
We're all family here

One of the little miracles of faith is its power to make strangers into family. People who might never have known or even chosen to be with one another find themselves together in parishes, prayer groups, Bible study circles, the RCIA, and communities of faith. It's a visible sign of Christ's selfless love going out to those who otherwise would not be connected and bringing them together in bonds of concern and support. The "other" becomes a "sister" or "brother." Do something today for one of your "siblings."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 55:10-11; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23 (103).* "We wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

MONDAY, JULY 17
Try a little kindness

One look at the daily news reminds us: It's a cold, cruel world out there. Innocence is slaughtered every day. The harshness of the world can make us tough, self-protecting, and cold at the center: "Not my job. Not my problem." But the violence of our generation really is our problem, and the job of responding to it can only be ours. We have one great weapon in the war against cruelty. Today, unwrap the gift of *kindness*. Use it liberally, especially with those who "trespass against you."

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 1:8-14, 22; Matthew 10:34-11:1 (389).* "Pharaoh then commanded all his subjects, 'Throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews.'"

TUESDAY, JULY 18 MEMORIAL OF CAMILLUS DE LELLIS, PRIEST
Turn your struggles to service

Research suggests that more than 5 million Americans are problem or compulsive gamblers. Though he lived some 500 years ago, Saint Camillus would be able to relate because he suffered from the same problem as a young man. In fact he lost everything he owned gambling—which perhaps contributed to his ability a bit later in life to leave everything behind to follow Jesus, eventually founding an order dedicated to caring for the sick. Perhaps you think you could never be of much service to God because of some problem or difficult habit. But God doesn't work that way. There is a good chance that your deepest struggle holds the key to your path of service. You are called, just as you are!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 2:1-15a; Matthew 11:20-24 (390).* "Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live."

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19
Holy ground is all around

You're not looking for God in the supermarket. You don't expect to see God in traffic. You don't usually have a religious experience while doing homework, standing in line at the bank, or eating cereal. Moses was certainly not expecting to have a divine encounter during another quiet shift keeping an eye on the sheep. Coyote, maybe. The Holy One of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not likely. Yet when he climbed up to see the now-famous burning bush, God was waiting for him. Look more closely: Could that be God trying to get your attention?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 3:1-6, 9-12; Matthew 11:25-27 (391).* "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

THURSDAY, JULY 20 MEMORIAL OF APOLLINARIS, BISHOP, MARTYR
Share our sacred trust

Today we honor the first bishop of Ravenna in Italy. Originally from Antioch, Saint Apollinaris was given his assignment by Saint Peter to continue to make inroads in the spread of Christianity. Apollinaris faced constant persecution and was eventually martyred by the Romans. The city where he served, Ravenna, has become renowned for the beautiful mosaics that adorn its churches and monuments. Named a UNESCO World Heritage site, the city's sacred art is considered one of the best surviving examples of the blending of Western and Eastern styles. Apollinaris, a man from the East who took the message of Christ West, would be proud. What inroads will you make in spreading the gospel today?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 3:13-20; Matthew 11:28-30 (392).* "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me."

FRIDAY, JULY 21
MEMORIAL OF LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH
All we need is love

A theological and biblical scholar, fluent in several languages, renowned preacher, diplomat, minister general of the Capuchin order, diplomat, Saint Lawrence (1559-1619) pretty much did it all. Yet he never forgot the purpose of his work. "God is love," he wrote, "and all his operations proceed from love." Saints like Lawrence show us the strength of faith and inspire us to stretch ours. They also demonstrate how all our activity needs the guidance of love.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 11:10-12:14; Matthew 12:1-8 (393).* "I say to you, something greater than the temple is here."

SATURDAY, JULY 22
FEAST OF MARY MAGDALENE, APOSTLE TO THE APOSTLES
Appearances can be deceiving

Mary Magdalene is often depicted weeping (the English word *maudlin*, meaning "excessively weepy and sentimental," is derived from *Magdalene*). Although in 1969 the Vatican officially separated Mary Magdalene from the sinner in Luke's gospel, centuries of sermons and Christian art depicting Mary as the sorrowful, penitent prostitute have embedded that image into the Christian psyche. But this doesn't do justice to the woman early Christians called the "apostle to the apostles." Mary Magdalene was the first to see and recognize the risen Lord and announce his Resurrection to the apostles. Let her joyful witness inspire you to see Christ more clearly in your own life.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Song of Songs 3:1-4b or 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; John 20:1-2, 11-18 (603).* "Mary Magdalene announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord!'"



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

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