



SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2017 THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME We are Resurrection people

New life from apparent barrenness. Life out of death. Finding life by losing it. The readings you heard in church this weekend seem to present a contradictory message, but they actually present a truth: The life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus gives meaning to life, including its losses, hardships, and difficulties. A Resurrection faith takes up the cross and carries it to eternal life. Faith does not avoid daily existence; faith transforms it. And the evidence of faith is hope and service to others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a; Romans 6:3-4, 8-11; Matthew 10:37-42 (97).* "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

MONDAY, JULY 3 FEAST OF THOMAS, APOSTLE Be a faithful doubter

Legends abound about the apostle Thomas, including of his preaching in what is now Iran. Most often he is linked with India and credited with bringing the faith there. When the Portuguese arrived there in 1498, Christian communities attributed to him were still functioning. Not bad for someone stuck with the title "Doubting." But then again, how can you have faith if you are certain about things? Without doubt there can be no faith to have and to share. Today, face your doubts head on and believe enough to share your faith as Thomas did.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Ephesians 2:19-22; John 20:24-29 (593).* "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God.'"

TUESDAY, JULY 4 MASS FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY Liberty brings blessings—and responsibilities

If we sat down this morning and started listing the freedoms we enjoy as Americans, dusk could find us still at the task. The legacy of the United States is a tremendous blessing to her citizens, and our example continues to inspire nations around the world. But possessing freedom is not the same as knowing how to use it wisely. Like the woman with the flow of blood who reached out for her liberty with both hands when Jesus came by, we have been made the stewards of a remarkable gift that is also a challenging responsibility. What use do you make of your abundant liberty?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 19:15-29; Matthew 8:23-27 (378)*
"He said to them, 'Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?'"

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5 MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL Bring peace to family feuds

Keeping peace in a family isn't easy. But imagine the difficulty when relatives get into a fight and they command armies. Such was the problem Saint Elizabeth faced 670 years ago when war broke out between her son, the king of Portugal, and her grandson, the king of Castille. But all it took was news of her arrival on the scene for the two combatants to settle their differences. Such was Elizabeth's love of peace and the spiritual power she wielded. The recent fireworks could serve to remind us that the Prince of Peace is with us, calming the winds of war and stilling the sea of conflict.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 21:5, 8-20a; Matthew 8:28-34 (379).*
"The Lord hears the cry of the poor."

THURSDAY, JULY 6 MEMORIAL OF MARIA GORETTI, VIRGIN, MARTYR Forgiveness redeems lives

Maria Goretti was not even 12 years old when she rebuked the improper advances of her 18-year-old neighbor. Angered at her refusal, Alessandro Serenelli stabbed the young Maria more than a dozen times. On her deathbed she received the sacraments and offered forgiveness to her attacker. But her forgiving was not yet complete. For years Serenelli sat in prison, angry and unrepentant, until one night he had a dream in which Maria appeared to him offering a new life of forgiveness. From that moment he was a changed man. Goretti may be known for her purity, but her willingness to forgive stands as a testament to her heroic holiness.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 22:1b-19; Matthew 9:1-8 (380).* "Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home."

FRIDAY, JULY 7 Follow your heart instead of the money

Tax-collector-turned-apostle Matthew may not have had the most popular job when Jesus called him, but the key is not what we do before we hear the call but what we do after. Matthew dropped his lucrative post and followed Jesus without looking back. Would you do the same? If you sense that you often lack the courage of your convictions, look to Matthew for inspiration. He gave up the big bucks for even greater treasure. Let the richness of faith guide you on the right road.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 23:1-4, 19; 24:1-8, 62-67; Matthew 9:9-13 (381).* "He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, 'Follow me.'"

SATURDAY, JULY 8 MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY In the new

In Jesus something new was happening. He came to people who had particular expectations about who their savior was going to be. When Jesus started teaching and working among them, many did not accept him. He was not only breaking a lot of the rules, he was throwing a few out, too. Some did not realize he was revealing a radically different way of knowing and following God. His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom the church honors today and many other Saturdays, was open to that newness. She herself had taken an unconventional path. Are you ready to let your faith in Jesus change you?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Genesis 27:1-5, 15-29; Matthew 9:14-17 (382).*
"People do not put new wine into old wineskins."



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

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Prayer for the Protection of Religious Liberty

**O God our Creator,
from your provident hand we have received
our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
You have called us as your people and given us
the right and the duty to worship you, the only true God,
and your Son, Jesus Christ.
Through the power and working of your Holy Spirit,
you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world,
bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel
to every corner of society.**

**We ask you to bless us
in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty.
Give us the strength of mind and heart
to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened;
give us courage in making our voices heard
on behalf of the rights of your Church
and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith.**

**Grant, we pray, O heavenly Father,
a clear and united voice to all your sons and daughters
gathered in your Church
in this decisive hour in the history of our nation,
so that, with every trial withstood
and every danger overcome—
for the sake of our children, our grandchildren,
and all who come after us—
this great land will always be "one nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.