

Sunday, Aug 03, 2025

The freedom to be good

What does it mean to be free? For some it's a matter of not being trapped in oppressive circumstances, like an unsatisfying job, a difficult relationship, or an illness. For others it's the ability to find ways to live creatively within those situations. Some say freedom is about having choices. And there are those who think it's simply being able to do whatever they want. Christians believe Christ has freed them to discern what is truly important: to be generous rather than selfish; kind instead of cruel; truthful rather than deceptive. Use your freedom to choose the ways of Christ.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23; Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11; Luke 12:13-21

(114). *"If you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."*

Monday, Aug 04, 2025

Keep it on the down low

The Bible says Moses was the meekest man in the world. Today's saint, John Vianney, a.k.a. the Curé of Ars, was pretty lowly in his own right. It was said that he had a poor memory and no ability whatsoever to grasp abstract thought. In seminary he failed essential subjects like theology and Latin. But they ordained him anyway because his lowliness allowed God's love to shine through. Unlike others who let their ambitions get the best of them, Saint John Vianney stuck to his strengths. He cared for the people he was sent to serve. He advised other priests: "Do not try to please everybody. Try to please God, the angels, and the saints —they are your public." Good advice for all of us to follow.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN VIANNEY, PRIEST

Numbers 11:4b-15; Matthew 14:13-21 (407). *"All ate and were satisfied."*

Tuesday, Aug 05, 2025

God is waiting for you

You have to admire Moses. Two people close to him—Aaron and Miriam—had started asking why they couldn't be prophets, too. To settle the matter God called the three of them out for a talking-to: God trusted Moses, God said—end of argument. What's more, God punished Miriam with an instant case of leprosy. But Moses just as quickly asked the Lord to forgive Miriam. We see something similar when Jesus called Saint Peter to walk out on the water to him. Peter's initial faith sank pretty quickly, but Jesus caught him before he could go under. It's a virtue to keep faith—and to reach out a forgiving hand to others when they have not kept faith with you. God does it all the time. Remember the words of Saint Maria Goretti, the patron saint of forgiveness: "He loves, He hopes, He waits. Our Lord prefers to wait Himself for the sinner for years rather than keep us waiting an instant."

Numbers 12:1-13; Matthew 14:22-36 or 15:1-2, 10-14 (408).

"He cried out, 'Lord, save me!'"

Wednesday, Aug 06, 2025

Use your power for good

The two events we remember today offer a startling juxtaposition of images. First is the brilliant light radiating from Jesus as he is transformed on the mountaintop and the cloud from which is heard: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." Next to that is Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945: a blinding flash of light, a dense, dark, demonic mushroom cloud, and the greatest devastation humankind has ever seen. These images prompt us to consider the ways we use our knowledge and power, both individually and as a nation.

Does our "light," like Jesus', provide illumination, or cause blindness? To realize what we've done after the fact is too late. As Albert Einstein himself reportedly lamented about the atomic bomb, "If only I had known, I would have become a locksmith."

TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD; HIROSHIMA MEMORIAL DAY

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Luke 9:28b-36 (614).

"His clothing became dazzling white."

Thursday, Aug 07, 2025

Words to live by

Sixtus II became pope in 257 and was martyred almost a year later along with several deacons. Not only was he willing to die for Christ, it is inscribed on his tomb that he also offered himself first to the persecutors with the hope of saving his companions. Sixtus championed the belief that only one Baptism was necessary in life—it needn't be repeated, as some others claimed at the time. Once baptized in Christ, you always will be. That permanence makes extraordinary sacrifice possible. Indeed, through your Baptism, "you have become a new creation and clothed yourself in Christ," says the celebrant during the baptismal ritual. "See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven." Those are the words Christians choose to live by.

MEMORIAL OF SIXTUS II, POPE, MARTYR, AND COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

Numbers 20:1-13; Matthew 16:13-23 (410). *"Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."*

Friday, Aug 08, 2025

Bother to love

The Jesuit theologian James Keenan once said that sin was simply not bothering to love. Note: Sin isn't the absence of love; love is already there. Rather it's the failure to choose to take advantage of opportunities to love. Saint Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers, and Dominican brothers and sisters ever since have sought to put knowledge and love together guided by their motto: "To praise, to bless, to preach." You can do the same. Review your day and see where you did not bother to love or, in Dominican terms, to offer praise, a blessing, or a good word. Then take the trouble to do it tomorrow.

MEMORIAL OF DOMINIC, PRIEST

Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Matthew 16:24-28 (411). *"Did a people ever hear the voice of God?"*

Saturday, Aug 09, 2025

What would you risk?

Three Spanish saints—Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Ávila, and John of the Cross—wrote extensively on suffering and the role of the cross. Their writings helped draw Edith Stein (later Carmelite Sister Teresa Benedicta) into the life of the church. Even before the rise of Nazism, Teresa Benedicta, a Jewish convert to Catholicism who was gassed at Auschwitz in 1942, saw the cross as central in her own life: "I understood the cross as the destiny of God's people. . . . I felt that those who understood the cross of Christ should take it upon themselves on everybody's behalf." How willing are you to take up the cross on behalf of others? What would you risk for the sake of what is right and just?

MEMORIAL OF TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS, MARTYR

Deuteronomy 6:4-13; Matthew 17:14-20 (412). *"Take care not to forget the LORD."*

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



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