

Sunday, Feb 26, 2023

God's messengers

Have you thought much about your guardian angel since you prayed at bedtime when you were a kid? If not, maybe it's time to catch up with the one that's been assigned to help you. The word *angelos* means "messenger" in Greek, and since angels "always behold the face" of God in heaven (Matthew 18:10), they're well-positioned to intercede for you. Appreciate the watchful care that surrounds you and protects you from spiritual and perhaps physical dangers. Their constant attention indicates how precious you are to God and how active God wishes to be in your life.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11 (22). *"He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you."*

Monday, Feb 27, 2023

A book for your nightstand, next to your Bible

Grigor Narekatsi, born near the turn of the first millennium, was an Armenian mystical and lyrical poet, monk, and theologian. He has the distinction of being venerated as a saint in the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic Churches and was declared a doctor of the church by Pope Francis in 2015. The prayer book of Gregory of Narek is a fixture in religious Armenian homes, second only to the Bible, and is considered a masterpiece of Christian spiritual literature. It has been translated into 30 languages, including English. Given the rave reviews, consider this writer-saint for your next read!

MEMORIAL OF GREGORY OF NAREK, ABBOT, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18; Matthew 25:31-46 (24). *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

Tuesday, Feb 28, 2023

United in prayer

Pope Benedict XVI, may he rest in peace, wrote beautifully on prayer and the Our Father: "In praying our heart is opened. Not only do we enter into communion with God but actually with all the children of God, because we are one body. When we address the Father in our inner room in silence and in recollection we are never alone. Those who speak to God are not alone. We are within the great prayer of the Church, we are part of a great symphony that the Christian community in all the parts of the earth and in all epochs, raises to God." Pray the Our Father slowly and consciously today, with everyone.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 6:7-15 (25). *"This is how you are to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."*

Wednesday, Mar 01, 2023

Get on board for justice

Today marks the 98th death anniversary of Homer Plessy, the man who attempted to end segregation with his legendary ride on a whites-only streetcar in New Orleans in 1892. His efforts were unsuccessful, and the following seven decades of U.S. jurisprudence included segregation as a bedrock feature. Plessy, however, is much less heralded for the fact that he was a man of faith, a black Catholic whose famous ride was organized by an interracial activist group known as the Comité des Citoyens (Citizens' Committee). Their holy disobedience was one of the first Catholic-led efforts against the

developing hierarchy of racism in the formerly French and Spanish regions of the Deep South. May the courage of Plessy and his allies be of use to us today as we continue the march toward justice.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32 (26). *"Man and beast shall be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; every man shall turn from his evil way and from the violence he has in hand."*

Thursday, Mar 02, 2023

Read it and reap

Welcome to Read Across America Day, established in 1998 by the National Education Association to encourage this most central, enjoyable, and enriching of activities. Popular among teachers, students, and librarians, today can also be a day for Catholics to explore and support organizations such as the Catholic Media Association, whose members inform, inspire, and educate readers, keeping them connected to their faith, and telling the story of the church. Check a list of Catholic newspapers and magazines to find one you can support with a subscription. You in turn will be supported in your faith.

LENTEN WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Matthew 7:7-12 (27). *"Everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Friday, Mar 03, 2023

Store up treasure in heaven

Saint Katharine Drexel was born in Philadelphia in 1858 to a wealthy family. The Drexels had a reputation for generosity, reportedly opening their home several days a week to feed and care for people in need. They also made time every day to pray together. During a trip to Europe as a young woman, Katharine was able to have an audience with Pope Leo XIII. She asked the Holy Father to send missionaries to Wyoming. He answered, "Why don't you go?" Not long after, Katharine stunned society by leaving behind her privileged life to dedicate herself to religious life. She worked to improve living conditions and educational opportunities for African Americans and Native Americans. She left a legacy far greater than her family fortune.

MEMORIAL OF KATHARINE DREXEL, RELIGIOUS FOUNDER

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 18:21-28; Matthew 5:20-26 (28). *"Go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

Saturday, Mar 04, 2023

Short but sweet sainthood

Lenten inspiration can come from anywhere—from scripture to Instagram, from saints to young people. While not a Bible figure or social media influencer, 15th-century Casimir of Poland happens to fit the categories of both saint and young person. Saint Casimir was a prince who was under intense pressure from his family and country to take a leading role in government and politics. But Casimir felt called to focus on prayer, study, and care for people in need. Although he had to contend with some very disappointed people, he stood firm in his decision to follow his calling. Disease cut short his life at the tender age of 25, but his example can inspire us to live out our calling and thus help fulfill his.

MEMORIAL OF CASIMIR, PRINCE

TODAY'S READINGS: Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Matthew 5:43-48 (29). *"This day the LORD, your God, commands you to observe these statutes and decrees. . . . with all your heart and with all your soul."*

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



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